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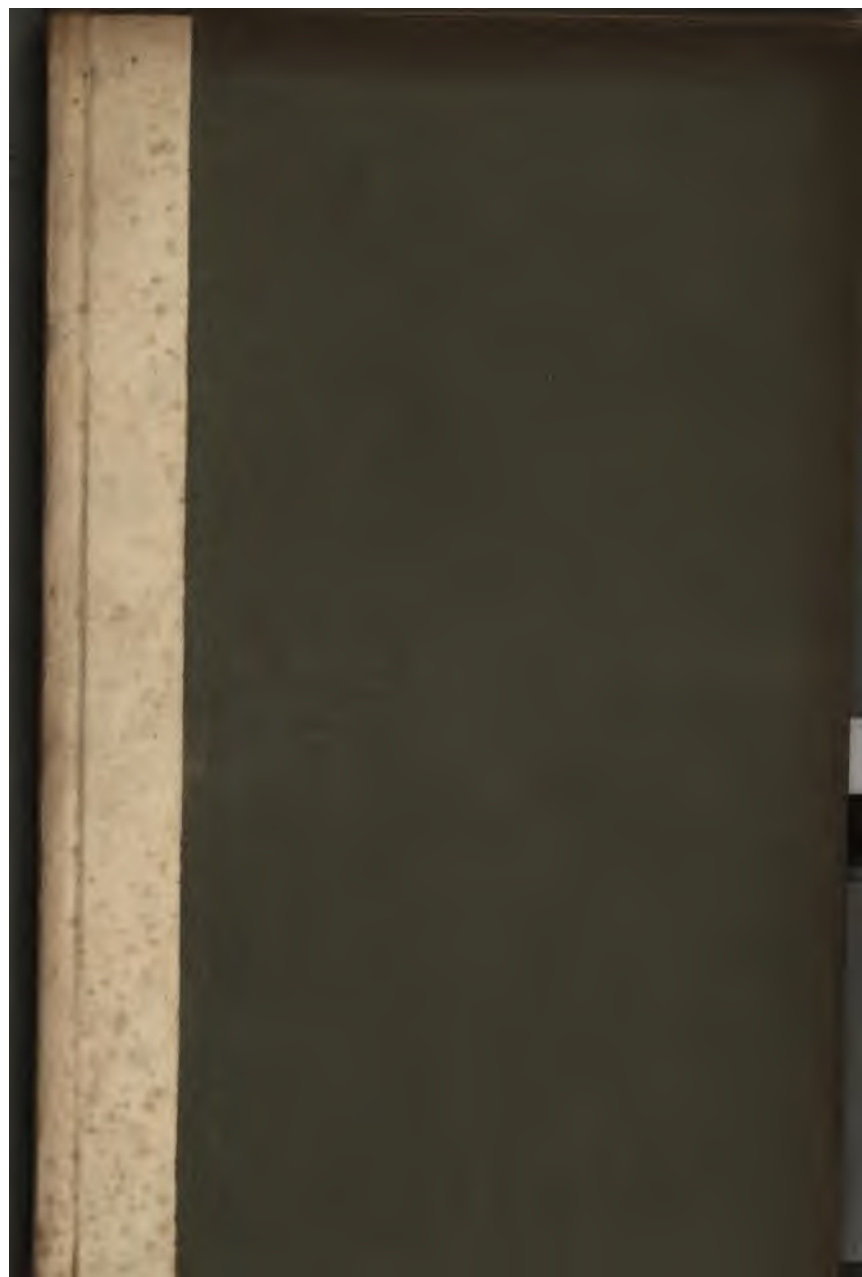
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RIVAL CLAIMS.



CHAPTER I.

REASON

"I am not mad."—Acts xxvi. 25.

ALAS for mankind, when wisdom and innocence stand arraigned at the bar, and royal guilt, or titled folly occupies the bench! Such, however, has often been the case. The motto at the head of this page forms part of the defence of an illustrious man, delivered by himself in these very circumstances. Let us for an instant glance at the parties concerned in this memorable trial.

There stands the prisoner; a man educated, ardent, eloquent, and convincing: free from crime, and free even from the charge of any disloyal act: once an inveterate foe to the name and people of Jesus of Nazareth; since that time a most devoted minister of the cause he then laboured to destroy; and in the scene before us appearing as its intrepid and powerful advocate.

His principal auditors and judges are Festus, the Roman governor of Judea, and Agrippa and Bernice the guests of Festus. The governor is distinguished in scripture only by his profound and contemptuous indifference to the claims of truth—a spirit which is abundantly

manifest in all his references to those statements of Christianity which, whether true or false, were already producing wide-spread and most important results. A philosophical and candid spirit would have led Festus to feel interest in an investigation of the alleged facts respecting Jesus of Nazareth: nor could the duties of his high station be discharged with any degree of propriety in the absence of accurate information as to the character and claims of Christianity. Yet all which he condescends to know about the matter is, that his prisoner was questioned about certain things in the Jewish superstition, and especially "about one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

King Agrippa and his sister Bernice were children of Herod Agrippa, who slew James the brother of John with the sword. If in regard to intelligence and candour they may be supposed to have excelled Festus, their moral character appears to have been bad. History has charged them with criminality of an exceedingly offensive kind.

Such were the three persons before whom the apostle Paul was called upon to vindicate his own character, the honour of his divine Master, and the truth of the gospel.

From Festus he received, in the midst of his eloquent address, an interruption, the rudeness and folly of which were in perfect keeping with the character of the man. Quite unable to conceive of any person as in earnest about mere principle, abstract truth, or even religious facts, he exclaimed, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

The firm but respectful vindication of himself and his cause which this coarse attack elicited from the apostle, presents him to our thoughts as a noble and finished

specimen of the Christian gentleman. Without returning railing for railing, and in a manner characterized by the utmost composure and respect, he first clears himself, and then appeals to the consciences and hearts of his hearers.

We fear that the language of Festus may be regarded as expressing an opinion commonly held by those who have no religion respecting such persons as are sincere, consistent, and earnest in their attachment to it. The world has always cherished, with complacency the most marvellous, a conviction that it has the monopoly of reason. A servant of God, in the attire of a prophet, once sought a private interview with a young military officer. That interview over, and before the slightest intimation of its nature had been given, his companions asked, "Tell us now, wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?" 2 Kings ix. 11. He was evidently a servant of God, and on that account alone they hesitate not to brand him with the charge of insanity. At a period somewhat later it seems to have grown into a proverb even in Israel, "The prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad." Hosea ix. 7. Jesus of Nazareth did not escape this censure when he was upon earth. None ever attempted to whisper the slightest accusation against his moral character; none ever dared to call him a bad man; but the paltry foes who could not do that, who would have given all they were worth to be able to do it, did dare to say, "he hath a demon, and is mad; why hear ye him?" John x. 20. His very friends, unable thoroughly to comprehend the spirituality and energy of his character, once said, "He is beside himself," Mark iii. 21. No marvel if the disciple be as his Lord. The same charge

has been in every age brought, in various forms, against the followers of Christ. The language of the world to really and earnestly pious persons has in effect been, "You have religion, and we have reason. We are wise men, calm, prudent, and rational: and you are mad. We may be compelled to respect some parts of your character, but of your understanding we have the lowest possible estimate. You could not feel and act as you now do, and under the influence of such motives as now affect you, if you were perfectly sane."

The disposition thus to speak is certainly not less marked now than at any former period. The young, and especially intelligent young men, are those who are most in danger of being affected by such representations. For their benefit chiefly we therefore proceed to an examination of the charge which is thus advanced. And let us at once say, that it is a charge which we are by no means disposed to admit as well founded. Reason is a high and noble attribute, although not the highest, and we cannot lightly renounce the claim to its possession. We are not mad; and possibly it may appear that the earnestly religious are the only persons who really act under the influence of sound and enlightened reason.

We must, however, proceed in the first instance to examine the charge defensively. The professors and advocates of religion are accused, as such, of irrationality. It is important to observe, that this accusation must be taken to relate to things which fairly and legitimately result from religion itself. The errors and extravagances which have sometimes been perpetrated by persons calling themselves religious have nothing to do with the question before us.

It would be the height of folly and injustice to reproach a skilful physician, or the art of healing itself, with the mischiefs perpetually caused by quackery; and certainly not less so, to charge upon religion, or upon those who consistently profess it, the follies with which its sacred name has been sometimes associated. The legitimate operation of true religion, as taught in the Bible, is all to which our present inquiry relates. We are fairly entitled to consider the charge of irrationality, so often brought against the followers of Christ, as limited to one or more of four things which we proceed successively to examine.

It may relate to the *principles* which we receive and hold, the doctrines and facts of God's holy word, which, upon the testimony of that word, we believe and maintain. The *intellectual* man of the world brings reason and revelation into competition. His reason cannot demonstrate, or even comprehend, some of the things which we sacredly believe; and he therefore calls us irrational. But may not we, in reply, ask such a man to consider the imperfection which undeniably marks human reason in its present state? Can he deny that, whatever it may have been once, it is weak and erring now? We may press him with a thousand proofs that it is often warped by prejudices, and misled by defective information. It will be no difficult thing to compel him to admit that it has often led its possessors astray. It is probable that his own consciousness will supply more than one case in point.

Next, we remind our antagonist that while we admit our belief in some things, the demonstration and even explanation of which lie *above* the reach of human reason,

we deny that any article in our faith is *contrary* to it. He himself is compelled to proceed in far inferior things on the very same principle. Can he explain, for instance, *how* fire acts in the consumption of bodies submitted to its influence? Can he explain his own complex nature, —or how its complexity is compatible with that oneness of which he is so thoroughly conscious?

We further proceed to remind him that all the separate facts and doctrines of the Bible have been examined with the most rigid scrutiny, in instances innumerable, oftentimes by men distinguished in the history of mankind by the clearness, the comprehensiveness, the power of their reasoning faculties: and that the result has been their complete satisfaction, their implicit faith, their solemn testimony, their living, dying hopes. The names of Locke and Newton, men utterly free from *professional* interest or bias, will be sufficient for our present purpose. Upon the several parts, as well as upon the grand whole, these and such men have repeatedly pronounced their most deliberate and admiring judgment. Stupendous indeed ought to be the intellect of that man who denounces others as irrational on account of their faith in principles and facts which such men held, and in which they gloried.

It might, finally, be suggested to such an opponent that, after all, the very highest exercise of the human intellect may be found in its absolute submission to the divine. Let him realize the infinite superiority of the mind of God to those of all his creatures; let him admit the possibility of a communication from God to man; in other words, let him be found anywhere above the deepest and grossest deism, and he may be led to perceive that

to admit and rely upon that which God has spoken, even when we cannot fully understand it, is one of the most noble acts of which the loftiest intellect is capable. "We are not mad," we venture to affirm, "though we believe all which the Bible contains; for it is the word of Him who cannot lie, and who made us, body, soul, and spirit."

But the charge of irrationality is sometimes founded on the *spirit* which we are required to manifest; and it is then advanced by the man whose characteristic is that of *worldly pride*.

Such a man knows a little of what the Bible says on this point; and he sees more of the same offensive kind exhibited by those who sincerely believe in the Bible. He calls the legitimate Christian spirit by such names as meanness, cowardice, indifference to our own interests, indifference to the opinion of the world. Let us at once admit that the things which he thus misnames, even meekness, patience, forbearance, the forgiveness of injuries, humility, disregard to the maxims and sinful habits of the world; all these are required in the Bible, and are not seldom displayed in the lives of the professors of our holy religion. Now as the only arguments which can be supposed to have any weight with such an objector must be drawn from the present life, we content ourselves with replying, that by the maintenance of these things we consult our own peace and safety, and promote our real happiness. The meek inherit the earth, while the angry, contentious, and vindictive man perishes out of it. Better, even for the things of this life, is the patient in spirit, than the proud of spirit. The world may *applaud* one who is called "a man of honour," but is constrained to *admire* a meek and lowly Christian.

Even enlightened heathens could arrive at conclusions in keeping with the statements we are now making. Plato, Seneca, and Epicurus may be adduced as evincing, even on worldly principles, that they are not mad, but the wisest of men, who cultivate such a spirit as the gospel requires.

Not unfrequently, the charge which we are now examining is made on the ground of that *conduct* which alone can constitute any man a consistent Christian. We refer to a course of deep, constant earnestness in regard to our own salvation, and that of others—the habit of acting like men who really believe that religion is true and infinitely important. This the *self-indulgent, listless worldling* calls madness. He does not censure our creed ; he does not condemn our forms of worship ; but for a man to be in earnest, especially about religion, he deems most unaccountable and inexcusable folly. So it has always been. “We are,” said the apostle Paul, (accounted) “fools for Christ. If we be beside ourselves, it is to God.” But is this madness ? Even on your own principles and modes of action, can it be so condemned ? The merest hint or suspicion as to the possibility of your obtaining wealth throws you into a feverish excitement, and elicits a course of action from which you do not cease until your aim is either achieved or found hopeless. If you labour under some painful disease, you never rest until you have found a physician who understands it, and a remedy by which you may be healed. So we act. We find, as you also will sooner or later find, that this world is unsatisfying. We believe that the God of mercy has taught us how to gain a better. We know *that the time* in which it must be secured is short. We

labour to enter into rest. We strive for the strait gate. We give diligence to make our own calling and election sure, and to take others with us to heaven. We are willing to make any sacrifice, and to encounter any toils by which that glorious prize may be secured. Nay—we are not mad;—but we are in earnest. Would to God that we were far more so!

And sometimes the charge relates specifically to our *hopes and prospects*. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. The *infidel* and the *sensual* worldling deride these. The one affirms them to be mere fables; the other despises them in comparison with present pleasures, and bids us gather our rose-buds while we may, assuring us, in one of his most favourite proverbs, that “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” In opposition to both, let us carefully and gratefully observe the purifying and supporting influence of Christian hope.

Multitudes are at this hour seeking to realize its blessed objects “by patient continuance in well doing.” Thousands of happy homes are made more happy by the presence of such hopes. Innumerable scenes of affliction are gladdened by the prospects of future bliss. The gloom of the sick chamber is dispelled, and the very darkness of the grave irradiated, by the beams of glory which descend upon believers from the invisible world.

Nor do they ever fail. No man who sincerely cherished them in life, was ever known to doubt their value, or to entertain even the thought of renouncing them, when he came to die. Were we to admit for a moment the possibility that they are unfounded, still we should say, Better far is it to have, than to live without, such hopes

—so purifying, so ennobling, so full of comfort, so faithful till the last hour of life. They make us more happy than your sensual gratifications ever could; nor shall we live to feel disappointment in the knowledge that they have failed.

But they cannot fail. We have myriads of proofs of the divine power and faithfulness in other things: why should we doubt them here? “By two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we have strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.” Heb. vi. 18. Jesus has said, “I go to prepare a place for you. I give unto my sheep eternal life. Whoso believeth on me I will raise him up at the last day. I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” John xiv. 1—4; x. 28; vi. 39.

No: the true Christian is not mad. He speaks the words of truth and soberness. His spirit, his conduct, and his hopes are such as really enlightened reason must approve. Reader! We beseech you to present yourself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, for this is your *reasonable* service. So far from fairly bringing yourself under any charge such as that we are examining—a charge which often proves a formidable obstacle to a reception of the gospel, in the case of youthful and aspiring persons—we unhesitatingly affirm that you will be raised in the scale of true rationality, just in proportion as you become a sincere, earnest, and heavenly-minded Christian.

But we cannot stop here. This favourite accusation of the world may, unless we greatly mistake, be fairly retorted on itself. There are found in the world certain

common practices in regard to religion, the bare specification of which will go far to show that, even if reasonableness had been wanting among the truly religious, its home would be sought in vain amongst those who neglect religion.

For instance ; is it the conduct of a reasonable being to allow statements such as those contained in the Bible, and which are believed by myriads upon what they deem evidence the most unexceptionable, to remain without examination, and almost without notice ? Yet this is far from uncommon. The celebrated Doctor Johnson, according to the statements of his own diary, knew very little of the contents of the Bible when more than sixty years of age. The writer never knew an instance of an irreligious person who was able to affirm that he had read the Bible through. Now, for anything that infidelity has ever shown, or attempted to show, to the contrary, that book may prove to be true. The bare possibility places in a strong light the folly—the madness rather—of those who, having some general idea of its contents, do nevertheless reject or despise it without careful examination.

Is it reasonable, we may further ask, to *inquire* into the nature or evidence of religious doctrines, under the influence of a proud, impure, irreverent, hostile heart ? In this spirit many infidel leaders in our own country, and not a few critics of the sacred volume on the Continent, have evidently come to the study of God's holy book. What marvel if to such persons the things which it contains prove foolishness ? “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually

discerned." 1. Cor. ii. 14. While we deny that the Bible is to be studied just as we study a book of science, while we claim for it to be received as the word of God who liveth and abideth for ever, and to be treated accordingly; we yet affirm that he who should study a merely scientific volume in the cold, prejudiced, or disdainful spirit in which myriads approach the Bible, would be deemed, and justly deemed, utterly destitute of a candid and philosophical mind.

Within this awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries.
O happiest they of human race,
To whom their God has given grace
To hear, to read, to fear, to pray,
To lift the latch and force the way.
But better he had ne'er been born
Who reads to doubt, or reads to scorn.

Is it reasonable, we ask again, to deny or to *revile* statements which are so strongly authenticated, and which it is impossible to disprove? This has been done by men of the world in every age. Thus the Athenian philosophers dismissed, on its first mention, the doctrine of the resurrection. Acts xvii. 32: "Some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." Thus Festus, as we have already seen, trifled with the alleged facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Acts xxv. 19, 20. Thus Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the father of English deists, wrote a book to disprove the possibility of a divine revelation to man. When he had written it, doubting the desirableness of its publication, he asked God, on bended knees, to *give him some intimation of his will* in the matter. He shortly heard, or fancied he

heard, a low rumbling noise in the heavens, and this he construed as a direction from God to proceed with the publication of a book written for the purpose of denying his power to make known his will to man !

With scarcely less of inconsistency, Faustus Socinus speaks of an interpretation of John viii. 58, which entirely denies the eternity and divinity of Christ, as having been obtained by many prayers from Christ himself ! These are but illustrations of the flippant, reckless manner in which the truths of the Bible are rejected by men "professing themselves wise," but who have evidently "become fools."

Is it reasonable, we further ask, to *oppose* so exalted a system of doctrines, by which results of so amazing and beneficial a kind have been undeniably effected ? It is enough for our present purpose simply to remark that the religion which we profess has overturned the ancient idolatry,—rescued woman from degradation,—diffused civilization and comfort throughout the world,—erected hospitals,—provided for the poor,—modified slavery,—diminished war,—and administered to myriads a consolation and a happiness for which in vain they looked elsewhere. Is it wisdom, or madness, to oppose a system which has done all this ? Let St. Paul answer the question. He, who as a Christian and an apostle of Christ affirmed before Festus, "I am not mad," referred on another occasion to his past life, Acts xxvi. 11, and unhesitatingly admitted that he was "exceeding mad," when he persecuted the cause and followers of Christ. Let every actively irreligious reader, if the eye of such should ever rest on these lines, ponder well that memorable confession.

Is it reasonable, or the reverse, to *resist and stifle convictions* of the probable truth and value of Christianity? Felix did this when, trembling under the words of Paul, he said, "Go thy way; when I have a convenient season I will send for thee." Acts xxiv. 25. Agrippa did it, when he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," Acts xxvi. 28, and then returned to an immoral course of life. Is any reader conscious of having acted a similar part? Let him ask himself whether such conduct is worthy of a rational being?

Is it reasonable to admit in theory the truth and value of Christianity, and, it may be, to pay it a slight outward deference, and yet *to live as if it were not true*,—careless, indolent, worldly-minded? Of all the illustrations of prevalent irrationality concerning religion at which we have glanced, this is the most common and, on some accounts, the most criminal. This is to sin with our eyes open. It partakes of the guilt of hypocrisy. It destroys all possible palliation or excuse. Out of their own mouths will those be condemned who have the form of godliness, but deny its power; who give Christianity the homage of the lip, and withhold that of the heart and life. This, indeed, is madness.

And must we not, finally, assert the same of the course which every infidel pursues? He rejects the evidences of religion and its benefits in both worlds, for the no-good which infidelity affords, and at the tremendous hazard of realizing all the terrors which the Bible delineates as prepared for the ungodly in the world to come; for, and let the statement be well pondered, *it is absolutely impossible for infidelity to prove that the Bible is not true*. She may carp at evidence, deny miracles,

sneer at believers, say in her foolish heart, "No God;" —but the PROOF that our preaching and faith are vain she can never bring. Is not that man mad who hazards the awful interests of eternity upon the possibility that there *may be* no God, no soul, no hereafter; and this in the face of so large an amount of evidence, that the supposed possibility has no existence but in the pages or the declaration of an infidel teacher?

In conclusion, we invite the reader to the careful study of the word of God, and to simple faith in the cross of Christ, as the highest exercise of sanctified reason. Let him become as a little child; let him receive as such the truths which our heavenly Father has been pleased to reveal, and act in consistency with them. He will forthwith rise in the scale of intellect. The truest, noblest reason will be the rule of his life. From that point he will advance eternally, exclaiming with every new discovery of the infinite excellence of divine truth, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God!"

Christ is emphatically the wisdom of God. He who knows, loves, and trusts Him, is made wise unto salvation. The boasted wit and reason of the world will one day, stripped of all disguise, appear consummate folly. In that day many of the proudest decisions of fallen man will be most ignominiously reversed, and that by the last Authority in the universe. Maxims which have been tenaciously held by myriads in all ages of the world, and which have been allowed to regulate the lives, and to decide the destinies of those who held them, will be pronounced utterly worthless. It will then appear that human reason was always purblind and deceptive when

unenlightened by the truth of revelation ; and that they who have neglected that revelation under the plea of following their own reason, have been acting the part of madmen, without having the excuse which insanity affords, or deserving the pity which it never fails to secure. But the despised Christian will then be recognized before assembled worlds as the truly wise man : and the religion by which he has been brought to glory as having been in all its principles, all its requirements, and all its promised rewards, a reasonable thing.

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OR THE

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BY THE

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bring forth good fruit.”

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CHAPTER III.

KNOWLEDGE.

"Ye shall know the truth."—John viii. 32.

THE desire of knowledge is deeply implanted in the human mind. Man, in a state of innocence, had one enemy—an enemy determined and subtle. Seeking to seduce him from his allegiance to God, that enemy made his appeal to what he evidently deemed the master passion of human nature, when he said, "*Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" *Ye shall know*, has since that time been the promise by which all the great leaders in philosophy, morals, and theology, have encouraged men to become their disciples. The promise has a place in the Christian system. Jesus Christ, the teacher sent from God, who spake as never man spake, has caused it to be left on record among the assurances given to those who should become his sincere disciples: "*Ye shall know the truth.*"

It could not be imagined a likely, or even possible, thing, that there would exist no controversy between the religion of the Bible and systems of a hostile character, about a possession so valuable, so highly extolled, so intimately connected with the welfare and elevation of man, as that which forms the subject of the present chapter. There are, in truth, few things which have

been more constantly and eagerly brought into dispute ; few respecting which more of practical variance is displayed between true religion and its rivals.

When common knowledge is assiduously cultivated by any man or class of men, but the knowledge which is *divine*, is neglected and even despised ;—when the supposed light of science is employed for the purpose of exhibiting defects, deformities, and falsehoods in the holy book of God ;—when men presumptuously intrude into hidden regions, and dogmatically pronounce upon those things which the all-wise God has concealed from mortals ;—when those persons who have the knowledge of God and of true religion are regarded with contempt, because, it may be, they have no other knowledge, or because they have been divinely taught to esteem this above all their other acquirements ;—when men proudly exult in their own lofty intellect, or extensive attainments, and give no honour to the fountain of all wisdom, the God who kindles the lamp of every human mind, and whose care alone preserves it every moment from extinction ;—in these and all similar cases the spirit of rivalry between religion and the world is brought into full exercise, and knowledge is the occasion or theme of the contention.

Nor is anything more common than the spirit thus exhibited. The hearers of our Lord Jesus Christ were astonished at the wisdom and power with which he spake ; but they were scandalized, and rejected him, because, in the judgment of the world, he was not a learned man. The apostles followed him in his career of benevolent and holy instruction : but of them, too, the world took knowledge that they were unlearned and

ignorant men. And at this hour the same spirit prevails, perhaps more extensively than it ever did before. By worldly-minded teachers and writers of all grades—sceptical public lecturers, German critics, and reviewers—there is manifested complacency the most boundless in regard to their own intellectual and scientific attainments, in combination with undisguised contempt for the simple, humble acquirements—the ignorance, if you choose to call it so—of sincere Christians. The hearers and readers of such persons soon become impregnated with the sentiments of their teachers. The leaven spreads. Unless we greatly err in our judgment, one of the dangerous tendencies of the present age is in the direction of its becoming an age of light without holy love, of knowledge without God or godliness. Of such a tendency, if it really exist, Christians should be fully aware, that they may be prepared to display “a banner because of the truth.”

How then does the case really stand between religion and the world in regard to *knowledge*?

To investigate this inquiry is our object in the present chapter. And that our final testimony may be just, we cheerfully make, first of all, certain admissions in regard to secular knowledge.

We have no wish to deny or to conceal the eminent advantages connected with its attainment. These indeed have not been left for modern ages, or for worldly-minded men, to discover.

The very book of God testifies that “for the soul to be without knowledge is not good;” Prov. xix. 2. and that the people are destroyed for lack of its possession; Hosea iv. 6. The perfect truth of such statements is

evinced by large portions of the history of mankind in ages long gone by, as well as by the present aspect of many countries in all quarters of the globe, and, we must add, of some classes of the community even in our own highly favoured land. Let it be distinctly admitted that, other things being equal, a man is really honourable in proportion to the amount of knowledge which he has been enabled to make his own. And in some cases where other things are not equal, the possessor of knowledge is raised in the scale of true dignity above those who have in some respects superior advantages. A labouring man with a really cultivated mind is, for instance, unquestionably more worthy of respect than the ignorant possessor of almost boundless wealth.

Many temptations may be escaped, many actual evils averted, by the possession of knowledge, and by desires and endeavours for its attainment in higher degrees. That a superiority to low, degrading, brutal amusements is thus produced, and that ferocity of disposition and manners is thus greatly softened, or entirely removed, a glance at the population of our own country will abundantly prove. When compared with the same classes before Sunday-schools had commenced, and day-schools, with kindred institutions, carried on the work of instruction among them, the difference is most delightfully obvious. No less marked or pleasing would be the result, if the comparison were made between similar classes in our own country on the one hand, and in Spain, Portugal, or Italy, on the other. The most superficial glance would be sufficient to convince an impartial person that degradation and misery are inseparable from a state of general ignorance, and that the diffusion of knowledge is

adapted to afford to all men temporal good of the highest order.

On this point we have no controversy with any class of worldly men.

We are pleased further to admit, that the knowledge of the present day is unspeakably more sound, more practical, more valuable in every respect, than that possessed in any preceding age.

Physical truth is, to a greater extent than ever, its object. Its accuracy is all but perfect. It is practically employed; is made to minister to the comfort, the health, the longevity of mankind. When contrasted with the idle speculations of the schools, even on the subject of theology, which prevailed in past ages, the knowledge of the present day has an immeasurable advantage. Here again we have no controversy.

Once more, we freely and gratefully admit its wide diffusion. A man whose attainments, a century since, would have been deemed eminent, would now find himself below the average.

Many private persons, and even artizans, in our day, have an amount of knowledge which would have entitled its possessor then to high distinction. Knowledge no longer wears exclusively the garb of the schools. It is diffused through all classes of the community. Mechanics, labourers, and their very children, are becoming familiar with its elements.

All this we admit. In all this we rejoice. We reject, as cordially as it can be rejected by the most worldly man, the favourite dogma of the Romish church, that ignorance is the mother of devotion.

Thus far, then, we have no controversy with those

advocates of knowledge who are also opponents or neglecters of true religion.

But it is time to take the more decidedly Christian view of this subject. When this increased amount of improved secular knowledge is in any way used so as to disparage true religion—and we have seen that this is often the case—such rival claims must be met by the faithful Christian; and the honour of his divine Master, the Fountain of wisdom, vindicated. Two or three considerations may be successfully urged in refutation of the arrogant assumptions often put forth.

The first has been in part anticipated. All that can truly be said respecting the advantages of knowledge belongs no more to the man of the world than to the Christian. The purest and most ethereal saint may excel in all secular knowledge. St. Paul may be adduced as a striking illustration of this remark. His scholarship is evident in his quotations from the Greek classics; his general knowledge appears in nearly every page of his writings. It would be easy to mention, as living in our own day, many men whose piety is both undoubted and eminent, and whose literary and scientific attainments are second to none.

The world has no monopoly of knowledge. And if Christians are sometimes found who do not possess it, the circumstance may arise from accident, or mistake, but not from any fair application of the principles of Christ's holy religion. Their parentage, their poverty, the too great demands made upon their time by daily labour, their indolence, or their mistaken views, may have kept them ignorant, but not their religion. By no fair method of representation or argument can that holy

system be made responsible for the ignorance of any of its professors. Everything in which the worldly-minded advocate of secular knowledge can glory is open to Christians, and is to a great extent cultivated by them.

But we must go farther than this. We claim for Christianity the praise of having principally effected the vast improvement, in this respect, in which ourselves and our opponents alike rejoice.

To enlighten man in secular things is not, indeed, its principal design ; but it forms one of innumerable blessings which Christianity scatters by the way, as she conducts men to regions of eternal life. Search and see. You will find that those nations which have made the highest attainments in secular knowledge, and have at the same time made the greatest efforts for its diffusion, are precisely those in which true evangelical religion has most extensively prevailed. The instructions given within the precincts of the Christian church, the self-denying efforts of the Sunday school teacher, the consecrated exertions made by Christians in various directions, have undeniably given the main impulse to mind, in this and in other lands.

The Mechanics' Institute followed the Sunday School. The religious tract was the harbinger, and doubtless the suggester, of cheap publications for the advancement of knowledge. The improvement on which, in common with us, the world looks with delight, is fruit from the good tree of true religion.

But we have another and still more important remark to offer. After all that can be said on these subjects, we have, as Christians, a knowledge which is vastly superior to any other ; and to this worldly men are ne-

cessarily and entirely strangers. The knowledge of Christ Jesus, the peculiar characteristic and glory of true religion, is infinitely more valuable than all other knowledge. We hesitate not to put the case thus: suppose, on the one hand, a man really possessed of this, but ignorant of common things even to the very letters of the alphabet; and, on the other, one of resplendent abilities and exalted attainments; a man familiar with the circle of the sciences, master of all languages, deeply read in universal history, thoroughly versed in the philosophy of the human mind; but withal ignorant of Christ, destitute of true religion: in such a case there ought not to be a moment's hesitancy in affirming that the former is in a position infinitely more desirable than that of the latter. Let us take, in confirmation of this sentiment some few suggestions tending to exhibit the comparative excellency of divine and secular knowledge.

Think of their *objects*. The one relates to the primary principles of matter, and their manifold combinations; the starry heavens, the air, the earth, the water; to plants and animals; to the body and the mind of man. All are deeply interesting themes; all possess the power of raising, in proportion to the extent and correctness of our acquaintance with them, our views of the wisdom, power, and goodness of their divine Creator. But the knowledge which is properly called religious has for its objects the soul of man, its moral character, its hopes and prospects; the means of its recovery from sin and attainment of salvation; the character of the ever-blessed God, as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ; the entire range of Bible truth, in its relation to the condition and wants of man; and that mysterious state

of being which will succeed the present. Can we doubt the vast superiority of religious knowledge?

The next point to be considered is the kind and degree of *certainty* attendant on either kind of knowledge.

In that which is secular considerable doubt remains, and probably will ever remain. There are boundaries which human intellect can never pass, and which abruptly terminate successful inquiry. All beyond, and much within those boundaries, is mere conjecture. One theory succeeds another. The decisions of one age appear to be confuted by the researches and experiments of the next. And of ascertained truth, the greater part must be received by the many on the testimony of a very few. But perfect truth, unerring certainty, and individual experience, mark the knowledge which is divine. "Ye shall *know* the *truth*," is the gracious promise of Christ to all who believe in him. "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John v. 10. Such has been his personal experience of the vital power and holy influence of the most important statements which the mind of man can ever receive, that he has an ample demonstration of their truth within himself. He may have received them in the first instance, by simple faith, on the testimony of men whom God had evidently inspired to preach or write them, but subsequently he has proved, in his own heart and life, their divine origin. Formerly he *believed*, now he *knows* them true. No infidel sophistries will ever agitate the deep calm of a holy mind thus filled with the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. And all that we have now said may be realized, and has often been realized,

by men who have possessed little knowledge besides. Wayfaring men, though fools, do not err in regard to divine knowledge. Isa. xxxv. 8. While all besides is uncertain, they may live and die exclaiming, "I know whom I have believed." Can we doubt the superiority of this to any secular knowledge?

We may next advert to the respective tendencies of each to *elevate* their possessors.

Mere secular knowledge, apart from moral excellence, does not necessarily confer real dignity. It is probable that Satan and his angels, those fallen sons of light, know incomparably more than any inhabitant of this world ; and mere knowledge may really serve only to connect men with these degraded beings, and to assimilate them to their moral character.

But the knowledge of true religion brings its possessor into alliance with the excellent and holy men of ages past ; patriarchs, who saw the day of Christ and were glad ; prophets, who spake of him, and gave witness to his grace and truth ; apostles, who desired to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings ; and myriads of subsequent believers, of whom the world was not worthy, and who have counted the knowledge of Christ and of his salvation their dearest, noblest treasure. Angels "desire to look" into the mysteries of divine knowledge ; and that mortal, whose mind and heart have been enlightened by the Spirit of God, is their fellow student, connected, allied with them by this holy knowledge. We may add without irreverence, this is knowledge which brings man into relationship with the infinite God. Peculiarly dear to the mind of God are the truths which relate to Christ Jesus. Hence the

striking language of our Lord: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."—Matt. xi. 25—27.

How great the dignity of him who knows and loves the truths which have been the stay of the truly excellent in all ages of the world; which are still the objects of angelic research; and which are regarded with peculiar complacency by the blessed God!

And let us not fail to advert to each kind of knowledge as connected with the *purification* of moral character. Notwithstanding the undeniable fact to which we referred in an earlier part of this paper—that knowledge has a tendency to preserve men from degrading amusements and from the power of many temptations—it must be admitted on all hands that the most extensive literary and scientific attainments are quite compatible with the pursuit of much which is morally evil. Many men renowned for learning have been addicted to gross violations of truth, honesty, temperance, and purity. They have evidently loved darkness rather than light; and, hence, it is too evident that the light which was in them was but darkness. Let one instance suffice; it is that of the renowned naturalist, Buffon. "The horrible debaucheries of this man cannot here be stated. His vile conversation constantly drove every female of character from his company; and there is full evidence of his infidelity in his writings. He paid, indeed, an external respect to the observances of popery, but notice his own statement:—

'I have always named the Creator; but it is only putting mentally in its place the energy of nature, which results from the two great laws of attraction and impulse. When the Sorbonne plagued me, I gave all the satisfaction which they solicited. It was a form that I despised; but men are silly enough to be so satisfied. For the same reason, when I fall ill, I shall not hesitate to send for the sacraments: this is due to the public religion. They who act otherwise are madmen.'"* Such was Buffon. It is to be feared that many learned men have but too closely resembled him. That there have been many, and those not strictly religious men, to whom no such charges will apply, of whom no such suspicions ought to be cherished, we cheerfully admit. All that we are concerned to maintain is, that the mere possession of secular knowledge furnishes no guarantee for the personal integrity or purity of any individual. But divine knowledge invariably purifies the mind and heart in which it abides. One main condition of its attainment is implicit subjection to the will of God. John vii. 17. On account of the absence of this, it remains to many learned men a mystery and a stumbling block. The pure in heart only can "discern" God here, as they only shall "see" him hereafter. Matt. v. 8. "His secret is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Ps. xxv. 9—14. "And every man who hath that hope in Christ," which springs from a real acquaintance with him, "purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3.

* Christian Spectator.

How clear the immense superiority of divine knowledge!

Nor less clearly will it appear, if we next glance at the powers of each to *satisfy* the desires of man. It was a striking and humbling testimony borne by the wisest of men when he said, "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Eccles. i. 18. In the pains requisite for the attainment of knowledge, in the very nature of some of the facts a knowledge of which we acquire, in the increasing thirst for its attainment, and equally increasing conviction that we do know, and can know, comparatively little; in these, and many other such things, the assertion of Solomon is verified. Mere knowledge does not satisfy the mind of man, does not make its possessor happy. We are constrained to add, neither does it necessarily exempt him from the dominion of low, vicious, degrading propensities and passions. Of this remark Solomon himself forms a well-known and deeply-affecting instance. Prodigious as was the extent of his acquirements, manifestly as he had received them from God by an act of special favour, they were not able to preserve him from revelling in the most unbounded sensuality. With pain we refer, in further illustration of the sentiment before us, to the celebrated author of the well known maxim, "Knowledge is power:"—a man who, in regard to the extent and depth of his acquirements, probably made a nearer approach than has been made by any other ordinary man to the wisdom of Solomon. From his office of Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, Lord Bacon was degraded, under circumstances which leave no doubt that the love of money was a ruling passion in the mind of this

otherwise great man. The habit of taking bribes, and that from suitors on both sides of the same cause, was clearly proved against him. Alas! for mere secular knowledge at its best estate! Contrast with such instances that of the apostle Paul, and the eminent superiority of divine knowledge, in this respect, becomes at once apparent. "Yea," said that devoted apostle, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Phil. iii. 8—11; iv. 12, 13.

This is the good old way, in which rest may be found for our souls; Jer. vi. 16. Shall we not eagerly walk in it?

And there is in the knowledge of true religion *a saving power* which secular knowledge does not possess. Let it never be forgotten, that as to all secular knowledge we may be profoundly learned, and yet die in sin, and be lost for ever. "But this is life eternal, to know *Thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;" John xvii. 3. Jesus saith, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;" John xiv. 6. Of those who believe in him, "it is written in the prophets, They shall all be taught of God;" John vi. 45. To such he gives

eternal life; John x. 28. They are made wise unto salvation; 2 Tim. iii. 15. The Spirit of truth guides them into all truth; John xvi. 13. They know, for they follow on to know the Lord; Hosea vi. 3. Death will not destroy, or even impair, the value of their present acquirements. It will introduce them to a world where they shall know even as they are known; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. There delightful, invaluable, and perpetual acquisitions shall be made. The faculties of the soul shall all be employed upon appropriate objects. The cravings of the mind shall be satisfied. No sin shall attend the pursuit of knowledge: no sorrow blight its attainment. In the light of God's own eternity we shall, emphatically, see light. Ps. xxxvi. 9.

Happy are those who now walk in the paths of heavenly wisdom; thrice happy, if they have been divinely led to begin in youth. And to all men those paths are open. The mountain of the Lord's house is established in the top of the mountains. Many people are even now saying, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." Isaiah, ii. 1 to 4. His way shall be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations. Ps. lxxvii. 9. Even now is the savour of the knowledge of his name sweet to not a few of our fallen race, in all lands. His truth is read in more than one hundred and fifty of the languages of our apostate world. From the east, the west, the north, and the south, men come that they may

sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. Systems of teaching in which he has no place, or which are directly opposed to his truth, tremble for their existence. Assuredly the day is near when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas. May God in mercy preserve the inhabitants of this land of light from neglecting that knowledge which alone can save the souls of men ; and which we are constantly sending forth to other lands, and to multitudes who " will receive it." May we earnestly and prayerfully search the scriptures ! On us may the word of Christ dwell richly in all wisdom ! Reader, come, and let *us* walk in the light of the Lord !

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CHAPTER III.

LIBERTY.



"The truth shall make you free."—John viii. 32.

WHEN uttering the word LIBERTY we touch a string in unison with which myriads of hearts have vibrated in all ages. Every generous youthful breast swells with the loftiest emotions when the sacred name is heard. There is still a magic power in the record of every past struggle in defence of freedom. Thermopylæ is a consecrated spot. Hampden will never cease to be venerated for his noble stand on behalf of the liberties of England, and indirectly of the world. In time past incense was burnt at the shrines of Liberty. In all ages some of the sweetest strains of poetry have been consecrated to this object of admiration. The noblest efforts of the mightiest masters of eloquence have been made in the attempt to describe or to preserve the blessings of liberty. Myriads of lives have been cheerfully sacrificed in its defence; and few have been those regions of earth in which he has not been thought to die the noblest death who has poured out his heart's blood in the endeavour to achieve or to maintain his country's freedom. Exaggerated

language may sometimes have been used on this subject ; but no one can deny or doubt the truth of the assertion, that of all worldly possessions liberty is the most valuable ; the last with which any man possessed of true nobility would be willing to part.

Recent political events have served to bring the name of liberty more frequently and more prominently before the eye and ear than for many years past has been the case. The triple watchword of the late revolutions in France has been " Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." Thousands in our own land have caught the cry, and echoed it with the greatest enthusiasm. The inquiry as to what is true and right on such a subject, must be always important, but is peculiarly so at the present time.

Now it is beyond a doubt, and worthy of our very attentive observation, that few of those, whether in our own or in other lands, who have adopted this political triad, have ever said or done anything which might lead to the supposition of their being identified with religious persons, or of their acting under the influence of religious motives. On the other hand, a large majority of those who profess to follow the dictates of the Bible have, notoriously, not been identified with the movements to which we refer. Hence the question may not unnaturally arise, Is not liberty a blessing peculiar to the world ?—a benefit which may be enjoyed without religion, and perhaps more completely in its absence ? This question it will be our endeavour to answer. Let it first of all be observed that, whatever may be there meant by the word, the religion of the Bible joins in the cry of Liberty ! —extols, proclaims, offers to the children of men,

presses on their acceptance, a blessing called by that name.

While we endeavour calmly and candidly to elicit truth on this subject, we shall probably find that while the same name is used, there is a wide difference between the liberty for which the world contends, and that which the Bible presents for our enjoyment. Probably too, we may find new reason for firm confidence in the general principle which these Essays are designed to illustrate—that “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

Our first observation is, that the religion of the Bible does not patronize, does not permit, the insubordination and licentiousness which are often supposed to constitute liberty. Subjection—however offensive the doctrine may be to the proud heart of man—subjection is the law of the universe. Perfect independency and freedom amongst creatures are things impossible. Suppose them possible, they would continue unlawful, because directly opposed to the welfare of all parties concerned. Subjection is the law of the Bible.

The blessed God does not *ask* for faith and obedience at the hands of men. He *requires* them, and threatens a refusal with penalties of the severest kind. He demands that our very thoughts be brought into subjection to himself. No man has power, that is, *right*, over himself. “We are not our own.” 1 Cor. vi. 19. The very body is the Lord’s. The whole man is bound, by the most solemn obligations, to obey his laws, to live for his glory. God does not, indeed, compel the obedience which He thus requires. He leaves with men the *power* to do that which they have no *right* to do, and

to withhold that which they ought to render. But for all such conduct man is held accountable by his Maker. "For all these things God will bring him into judgment." Eccl. xi. 9. Every transgression and disobedience will assuredly receive a just recompence of reward. Man has not, in relation to God, liberty, in the sense of independence and irresponsibility.

And amongst men themselves different kinds and degrees of subordination are required by the same divine law, partly in order to facilitate the acquisition and practice of simple submission to the most High God. Thus children are required to obey their parents. Exod. xx. 12; Eph. vi. 1. Servants are to be subject to their own masters in everything. Eph. vi. 5—8. Wives are to see that they reverence their husbands. Eph. v. 33. Subjects are required to obey that government from which they derive protection to person and property. 1 Pet. ii. 13—15. To the Christian subjects of Nero, one of the worst of those princes who have disgraced the thrones on which they sat—to the Christian subjects of Nero, the apostle said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," &c. Rom. xiii. 1—7. St. Peter also has given the short but explicit precept, "Honour the king." 1 Peter ii. 17.

If from secular we turn to spiritual things, we find it written, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Heb. xiii. 17. So far as they can show the authority of Christ, the Christian is bound to yield submission to those who are over him in the Lord. And both in civil and in spiritual things, the very rulers of others are subject to the laws which they

administer, and to Him who placed them where they are, and who is no respecter of persons. The Bible is the uncompromising foe of licentiousness, whether in kings or in people. That it is utterly at variance with those doctrines which claim for men the right of living as they please, independent and irresponsible, one passage more will make abundantly manifest. "Be subject," says the apostle Peter, "Be subject, all of you, one to another, and be ye clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly." 1 Pet. v. 5. The Bible, then, is the advocate of universal subordination and subjection. What wonder if it has been often rejected by those who contend for universal anarchy and licence?

We proceed to another remark. The Bible does not teach that liberty (using the word in its more legitimate sense) is essential to the happiness or well-being of a Christian. The apostle Paul, addressing some who were suffering under the yoke of a slavery certainly not less galling than that of modern times, has an expression directly opposed to much worldly teaching on this subject; an expression which has been often overlooked even by good men whose views have been extreme. "Art thou called," says he, "being a servant (literally, *a slave*), *care not for it*; but if thou mayest be free, use it rather." 1 Cor. vii. 21. We can easily imagine that some would at once stigmatize this as a slavish sentiment. We hold it (even apart from the inspiration) to be one of the noblest ever uttered. Those to whom it was addressed had been called to the faith of the gospel. They had received Christ Jesus as their Saviour. His holy religion had imparted to those poor slaves an inward

principle by which they were elevated in true nobility far above the most exalted of merely worldly men. Already were they possessed of a freedom such as man could neither give nor take away. They had access to an ever full and flowing fountain of heavenly consolation, which might well cheer them under all the trials of earth. A hope full of immortality shed its radiance over their path ; well might they disregard the darkness through which they were called to walk. It was comparatively a light affliction, and but for a moment ; a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was in reserve for them : and that very affliction was, in the hands of their heavenly Father, a part of the means by which they were to be fitted for the possession of that inheritance of glory. Well might they be indifferent as to their lot during the brief, the almost momentary, continuance of their stay on earth. The apostle, indeed, bids them avail themselves of the opportunity of becoming free, if ever it should fairly occur. If the God of providence should incline the heart of their master to liberate them ; if any third party, taking pity on their sufferings, should be willing to purchase and emancipate them ; if any change should be made in the laws under which they lived ; if in any of these or similar ways they "might be free," let them regard it as the gracious intimation of their heavenly Father's will, and thankfully embrace the blessing of freedom thus kindly bestowed from on high. But if it were not so, the apostle teaches these poor slaves so deeply and habitually to regard the invisible and eternal, as to feel that even the priceless gem of liberty was not to be sought at all hazards ; that its attainment was not worth one turbulent struggle, or

the effusion of an oppressor's blood. "Art thou called being a slave? care not for it."

Need we state the natural, the inevitable inference from this precept of the apostle?

The religion of the Bible does not justify those who are prepared to repel and to resent, at whatever cost, the slightest interference with their just freedom; while upon the spirit and aims of men who are willing to plunge a nation into anarchy and blood, merely for the sake of effecting a change, or in the pursuit of some untried scheme, or in order to obtain freedom from just laws and salutary restraints, or in the hope of gaining some portion of that worldly wealth which the providence of God now allots to others—upon the spirit, the principles, the designs of such men, a condemnation the most emphatic, is the only sentence which can be pronounced in harmony with the holy word of God.

It will go far to preserve us from many of the evils which are at present rampant around, if we will remember that even true, natural liberty, is represented in the Bible as a thing which, however valuable, is not really *essential* to our well-being, and one which is not to be sought and obtained at whatever cost, whatever hazard.

But let us proceed to glance at the influence which has been exerted by our holy religion on true, natural liberty.

Nothing is more certain than that, where the religion of the Bible is unknown, true liberty is not possessed. The histories of ancient Greece and Rome, and the aspect of countries at this moment where Christianity does not obtain—or where, as in the case of Russia, it is known only in a corrupt form—will alike prove the

correctness of this statement. One form of selfish tyranny is perpetually succeeding another, in lands which do not obey the gospel of the Son of God. But look at a country like our own; here the influence of true religion has, by degrees, brought the power of the monarchy within just and salutary limits; and, at the same time, has tended to restrain an evil, certainly no less formidable than that of kingly usurpation, we mean the licentious tyranny of the multitude.

Never have civil rights or social privileges been, in any part or age of the world, so sacredly respected, so inviolably maintained, as amongst ourselves, at this hour. In addition to this, the right of private judgment is acknowledged; freedom of conscience is maintained; all may worship God according to what they deem his requirements; all are at liberty to propagate their sentiments and modes of worship; and this state of things, which has rendered Britain the object of envy or of hatred to nearly every other nation, we unhesitatingly ascribe, not to any form of worldly polity, not to any class of worldly politicians, but to the benign influence of the holy religion of the Bible.

We may see that influence exerted again, in the emancipation of those who once were slaves. Humanity has never had nobler triumphs than those which were effected in the abolition, first of the slave-trade, and then of slavery itself, so far as the British dominions and British subjects are concerned. Let it never be forgotten, that those triumphs originated in a purely Christian movement. Clarkson was a Christian, Wilberforce, Stephen, Buxton, Knibb, all were Christians; from the Bible did these men derive the hallowed im-

pulse, which has peacefully removed the curse of slavery from millions, and which will not be spent until no slave shall exist in our world. These were men of prayer and men of faith. The selfish and infidel world, with mere worldly politicians of every class, sneered at the movement, calumniated it, opposed it, until all felt that longer opposition was useless. It might most truly have been said to every emancipated slave, "Jesus Christ maketh thee" free. And so long as the golden rule remains in the New Testament; so long as we there read the words of Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," Matt. vii. 12; so long may it be confidently affirmed, that he is at best a most imperfect and inconsistent Christian, who dares to trample on the true liberty, bodily, mental, or spiritual, of his fellow man.

But there is a freedom, the product of true religion alone, and to which alone the name of liberty, in its widest and most sacred sense, can properly be applied. The ardent republican, glorying in complete emancipation from the rule of his fellow man, may be the degraded slave of lust, the miserable victim of Satan, "led captive by him at his will." Such a man is like the Jews, who proudly said, "We were never in bondage to any man," John viii. 33; and almost in the same breath, "We have no king but Cæsar," John xix. 15. We do not see the fetters which men wear: more completely enslaved, more pitiably wretched, than the degraded sons of Africa, are multitudes, whose perpetual theme is their liberty. "They yield themselves to sin, and his slaves they are whom they obey," Rom. vi. 16.

But the truly religious man experiences the fulfilment

of Christ's gracious promises. The Son makes him free, and he is free indeed.

Truth, the truth of God, is the instrumentality employed. The Spirit of God applies that truth to the mind and heart. By this process the soul is sanctified, and thus made free from all its former bondage. The fetters fall off when the Spirit of God thus takes possession of the soul. They who have been born of the Spirit have been born to a kingdom. They serve God, and to do this is to reign. "I will walk at liberty," said the psalmist, "for I seek thy precepts," Ps. cxix. 45. His service is perfect freedom. The Christian is freed from those innumerable forms of error by which others are led astray. He knows *the truth*, John viii. 32. He is free from the dire bondage of sin, Rom. vi. 18—22; and "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2. He has not received the "spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," Rom. viii. 15. The glorious liberty of the children of God! Who can explain, who can thoroughly comprehend the depth of that magnificent expression? The gospel is called "the perfect law of liberty." Those who profess it are required to speak and act as about to be judged by the law of freedom, James i. 25; ii. 12. Let us not pervert, let us be careful lest we mistake, the import of these expressions. Our liberty does not consist in freedom *to sin*, but in freedom *from* it. Accursed be the impiety which sometimes represents it as the privilege of the Christian to riot, without fear of present or future punishment, in the ways of sin. There is indeed a sense, a noble sense, in which the believer in

Christ may be truly said to live as he pleases. It is that which supposes him to find his pleasure in living in a manner agreeable with the holy will of God. Attaching any other meaning to such words, we ought to reject them with holy indignation, as containing an atrocious and soul-destructive falsehood ; a libel of the worst kind on the religion of Jesus Christ.

In truth, the noblest freedom to which in this world we can attain, consists in self-restraint ; in the subjection of our whole nature to the will of God ; in having Christ exalted on the throne of our heart, no will of our own running counter to his, but every thought brought into subjection to his sovereign sway. He who has been led by divine grace thus to subdue himself, and to become cheerfully subject to the absolute but blessed despotism* of the Most High, he is free of the whole creation. All others, whether rich or poor, bond or free, are still in the worst possible slavery.

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That bellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Sampson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied fields
Of nature, and, though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
The delightful scenery all his own.
Are the mountains, and the valleys his,
The resplendent rivers. His to enjoy

* Greek, with other passages.

With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—My Father made them all.

He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
Of no mean city ; planned or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state ;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less :
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound ; but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain ;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells."

COWPER.

Our subject would be incomplete without another remark. True religion makes us anxious to diffuse as widely as possible the freedom which we ourselves enjoy, earnestly desiring that all may share it. Most striking is the contrast between religion and the world which is suggested by this fact. Search the pages of history, glance at the late and present struggles of worldly-minded men, and you will be constrained to admit, that in its pursuit of liberty the world is always inconsistent, always selfish, always reckless. Need we advert to the notorious fact that thousands of our own countrymen have avowed themselves prepared to obtain

what they call liberty, by physical force, that is, by fire and sword ; by trampling upon the liberties and lives of their fellow men ? That such designs have been defeated we attribute to the overruling providence of God ; and, instrumentally, to the fact that England already possesses true liberty ; as much of freedom of every kind as is compatible with the well-being of society at large.

The world has not yet ceased to wonder at the wretched inconsistency recently displayed by the French nation. No sooner had they achieved what they deem liberty than the very restrictions on personal freedom, on account of which the late government was overthrown, were again adopted. If the freedom of the press did not exist in France under Louis Philippe, certainly it cannot be said to exist except in name and in shadow under the republic. While these pages are preparing for publication, the daily papers report a case strikingly illustrative of this remark, which has been just decided, on appeal, in one of the higher courts. An article, not alleged to be malignant or inflammatory, appeared in a local newspaper. Four persons have been tried in connexion with this article, and found guilty ; one of having written a paper which he did not sign ; a second of affixing his name to a paper which he did not write ; a third of having rendered (literary) assistance in the composition of the article ; and a fourth, the editor, of having inserted in his journal an article to which the name of the real writer was not affixed. The whole were condemned in costs, with the additional infliction of six months imprisonment, and the payment of a fine of

freedom is the property, not of the world, but of religion?

Highly let us value, on this account, the glorious gospel of God,—the truth which alone can make men really free, or induce in them sincere anxiety to diffuse through the world blessings of TRUE LIBERTY.

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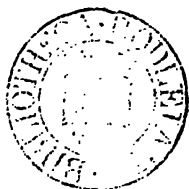
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CHAPTER IV.

FRATERNITY.

"*Love the brotherhood.*"—1 Peter ii. 17.

How sacred is the name of *brother*! How endearing the relationship which it represents! How sweet the ideas and recollections which its thoughtful utterance must ever awaken in many minds!

There is our common *origin*. We regard with reverence and affection the same parents as the authors of our being—the same countenances beamed upon us in our infancy with that delight and love which parents only can feel—the same hands laboured for our welfare—the same lips gave utterance to those words of endearment, the gentle tones of which no subsequent years have caused us to forget—

"The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow"—

The same father excited in both minds those early sentiments of mingled reverence and love which were but strengthened in following years, and with which, it may be, we now regard his memory.

Then there is the *resemblance*, closer than can exist in other relationships, even in those which are nearer and more intimate.

We think further of our *early community* of thought and feeling, of joy and sorrow, of pastime and of labour, and of a thousand endearing recollections which have multiplied upon us as we have together advanced to manhood.

Lovely indeed is the fraternal relationship, when lovingly and consistently maintained, and especially when cemented and consecrated by the grace of God and the power of true religion.

We need not say that the relationship is one which is designed to secure many important benefits during our passage through life. Thousands live in the daily enjoyment of them. Happy is he who in the midst of those cares, perplexities, and sorrows which mark the path of life, can repair to a brother for counsel, aid, and comfort, secure of finding in him the heart of true affection, and a depth of tender, earnest, faithful solicitude for his welfare, which no subsequently formed friendship can be expected to yield.

We cannot wonder that a grace called brotherly love is found occupying a very conspicuous place in the scheme of the gospel. As little need it surprise us that the name is often found occurring in the language of the world. That those who have received "like precious faith" in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ should be required to love each other as brethren, is but in keeping with the entire Christian system. And that the world should pretend, upon occasions, that there is maintained a feeling of brotherhood amongst mankind in general, is no less consistent. This is but one instance among many in which we find it compelled to do homage to true excellence by borrowing its name

and imitating its appearance, while at the same time the reality is unknown.

Our course in relation to the present subject differs considerably, in one respect, from that which we have had to pursue in previous essays. We have conceded to the world the possession of a certain amount of reason, knowledge, and liberty; but we have claimed for true religion, as its own inherent property, its splendid gifts to man, a reason, knowledge, and liberty, at once of a far superior kind, unspeakably more extensive, and lasting as the duration of our existence.

Truth and justice forbid us to pursue a like plan in connexion with the subject now before us. In regard to fraternity we look to the world in vain for anything more than the name, the shadow. The reality we are bold to affirm is not known to exist apart from true Christianity. We are not, of course, speaking of the bond of brotherhood in particular families. This is often maintained in considerable power, and continued even to the close of life, in cases where there is little reason to believe that the brothers have been "taught of God to love one another." Nature is the teacher; and the affection is merely natural. Such instances have occurred amongst those who have been profoundly ignorant of the first principles of revealed truth. We speak of fraternity, not between those who are brothers by birth, but between man and man. Where is it to be found? There is, indeed, the political cry, and it has been often heard of late—heard with much sadness by those who know its utter emptiness. There is a sentimental phantom, highly-wrought descriptions of which may serve to garnish a novel, or to excite and deceive a thoughtless

multitude, but this is all. Selfishness runs riot in the world. No thoughtful person would even seriously maintain that any considerable portion of mankind have ever been found treating each other as brethren, except those who have evidently been influenced by Christian principle.

Nor need this fact, humiliating as it is, at all surprise us. There are, in truth, no common objects of interest sufficiently powerful to overcome the inveterate selfishness of our fallen nature, and to induce men to love each other as brethren. All seek their own. "Every man for himself," is a well known expression of worldly principle. It is one the extensive and powerful influence of which no man can doubt. In a form the most pithy and pointed, it conveys an important article in the creed of the world; and at the same time a refutation of all worldly pretences to the maintenance of fraternity. Fraternity! How often has the cry been used to help forward a revolution, by those who were ready on the morrow to shoot their *brethren* or conduct them to the guillotine!

Hence we have a clear field before us. We may at once repair to the green pastures of Christianity, and contemplate with holy pleasure that brotherhood which is inculcated in the religion of the Bible, and which, amidst many imperfections and drawbacks, is yet in a goodly degree realized by those who profess to know and love that religion. The brief but comprehensive precept, "Love the brotherhood," is but one of a large class, devoted to the illustration and enforcement of this important duty.

That we may properly appreciate the vast difference

which exists between that which the world calls fraternity, and the Christian duty which bears this sacred name, it will be well to inquire into the principles upon which true fraternity is founded.

Our first remark is, that it is not commensurate with humanity. Every man is a neighbour, Luke x. 29—37, and as such is entitled to receive at our hands any good offices which his circumstances require, and which we have it in our power to render. Every man is a neighbour, but it is the Christian man only who is a brother, in the true and Christian sense of the word. It has been, indeed, not unusual to refer to our common relationship to Adam, and to affirm that there is furnished by it a bond of universal brotherhood. Alas! this is but a brotherhood in sin, and degradation, and woe. It is one of which the Bible teaches us to be ashamed. It is one from which divine grace delivers all those who are led to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ are all made alive. That we are alike descended from Adam furnishes a powerful reason why Christians should endeavour to rescue their former brethren from the horrible pit and the miry clay, out of which they have themselves been taken, but it does not invalidate the fact, "that old things have passed away, and all things have become new;" that the old brotherhood is discarded, and that we have entered into holier bonds, are members of a nobler family, and identified as brethren with those who are no longer in the world, but have been taken out of it. We have been led by divine grace to look to the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and to glory in our relationship with Him. On this basis is formed the

fraternal condition in which all true Christians, as such, exist.

In their case there is community of birth. They have all received a new life; and one which nature cannot give. All are "begotten again, not with corruptible seed, but with incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Pet. i. 23. "All have been born from above," John iii. 5. He who is the Father of lights, and God of all grace, hath "of his own will begotten us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," James i. 18. This process has passed upon all who truly believe. In every case it has been effected by the same divine Author; the same instrument, his ever blessed word, has been in every case employed; and the same Holy Spirit has in every case applied that word to the heart,—has produced there lively faith in the Lord Jesus, by which, in intimate and holy alliance with him, the soul lives. By the process which has thus taken place, those who were by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, are made sons of God and heirs of everlasting life. "Ye are all the children of God," says the apostle Paul, "through faith in Christ Jesus." "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 15, 16. All Christians are thus, in the highest sense possible to creatures, "the children of the Highest," Luke vi. 85. "Doubtless," they may say, "Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not." This honour have all the saints, Isa. lxiii. 16. Here, then,

we find the first grand idea which forms part of the basis of our Christian brotherhood. All believers are alike the children of the blessed God. All enjoy his favour; and the amazing change which has taken place in their character and condition has been produced by the same grace as the cause, by the same divine word and ordinances as the means, and by the same holy and blessed Spirit of God as the grand efficient. Hence the brotherhood which we are commanded to recognize and to love wherever it exists.

There is, again, community of *character*. Individual peculiarities may exist in abundance. The manifold imperfections of our fallen nature,—the vast diversity of constitutional temperament, of education, of circumstance, may all be alleged as explaining the differences of detail which are found universally to obtain in the characters of those who are alike Christians. But the main features—the leading elements of character—are the same in all those who are born of God. The same precious atoning blood has cleansed them alike from all sin. The same spotless and perfect righteousness has justified them from all condemnation. The same Holy Spirit has taught them to love Christ, and holiness, and heaven. Their conduct is regulated by the same law, which is holy, and just, and good. They have one faith, sufficiently defined in all its essential features to warrant them in declining to recognize as a brother any man who does not hold and acknowledge it. They have one pattern to which they are required to become conformed, even the character and conduct of their one adorable Lord and Saviour. To his image all are seeking to become assimilated. He is the archetype,—the first

model of pure and perfect moral beauty ; and "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 49. The apostle Peter speaks of Christians as "imitators of the Good One," 1 Pet. iii. 13, Greek. They are to resemble Christ, even as he "is the image of the invisible God," Col. i. 15. And thus will the whole family of God on earth become like their Father who is in heaven. It is the daily sorrow of every consistent Christian that his resemblance to the great common model of excellence is not more perfect than it is ; but he follows on to know, and love, and imitate his Lord, and finds pure and high delight in the contemplation of that yet future state in which holiness of character will be made perfect. "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

Here, then, is the second idea connected with the basis of Christian brotherhood. The sense of family relationship is heightened by the perception of a family likeness.

Next, we may refer to community of interest and prospect. All Christians have their share in all the blessings of the new covenant. The gospel which comes to all has by them all been received. It is their possession, their salvation, their desire. Nor is there one good thing which it promises but appertains to every believer. Possessed of the like precious faith, they live alike upon the same great and precious promises. To all sincere Christians it is said,—“Ye are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the First-born which are written in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to Jesus the Mediator of the

new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 22—24. All Christians have an abiding interest in the favour of the living God; all are named with his name; all are looking for, and hastening to, the heavenly inheritance,—an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." We are pilgrims to the same celestial city; we have entered by the same door; we are walking in the same road; the same dangers surround, the same enemies oppose us; the same provisions are made for our welfare; we alike drink of that spiritual rock which follows us; we feed on the same spiritual manna; we feel and know that we have a common interest in those many mansions which the power and grace of Christ have provided for all his followers. Can we be other than brethren? Can we fail to regard or love each other as such?

Nor is it unimportant to remark, that in the family of God there can be no legitimate room for those selfish, envious feelings which so commonly prevail in the world, and which often interfere to break up the peace of families (alas! even of Christian families), in connexion with the division of an inheritance. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely able to supply all the need of all his children. He can satisfy every longing desire; can make every anxious and sorrowing spirit happy. His resources are inexhaustible. His riches are the universe, and the infinite possibility of creating at his pleasure all that may be needful either for his own glory, or for the welfare of his children. The abundance of his gifts to one will never interfere with the welfare of another. The wants of all

his saints are supplied from the resources of infinite fulness. The sentiment which we maintain is perfectly compatible with that diversity of outward circumstances which now marks the people of God. To many of us he is pleased to give far less of worldly wealth than to others. It is not, however, because they have more that we have less; but because the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, and his very faithfulness towards us have led him so to order our inheritance. And still it is written for us as much as for our more wealthy brethren: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Ps. lxxxiv. 12. And in the world to come the largest capacity will be fully satisfied. All will be perfectly happy, and each rejoice in the happiness of others as his own.

Such, then, is Christian fraternity: the only fraternity recognized and approved by the Bible. It is properly as *narrow* as we have described it. No man is to be regarded as a Christian brother who does not profess his repentance before God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and also walk as becomes an heir of the grace of life. Beyond this we have no right to extend it.

It is not the possession of religious privileges; it is not the performance of a rite, however scriptural, however sacred it may be, which can constitute any man really a member of the household of faith. The children of God are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God?" John i. 12. A wicked life vitiates the loudest Christian profession, and forbids our recognizing as a follower of Christ him who leads it.

And on the other hand, thus *wide* is the Christian fraternal relationship, and we have no right to narrow it. He who regards and treats as Christian brethren only the members of his own particular part of the church of Christ, refusing the manifestation of Christian love to others who are as manifestly Christians as himself, sins against the grace of God and the will of Christ no less than another who throws wide the door, proclaims that Christianity is socialism, and invites men of all classes and characters to form a Christian brotherhood.

Regeneration by the sacred Spirit, holiness of life, love to God, and the pilgrimage to heaven, constitute the basis of this fraternity. How unlike this to anything which the world intends by the name !

It may be well just to glance at the benefits which this relationship is designed to secure. We say *designed* to secure. The guarded mode of expression is most advisedly employed. We are far from affirming that the fraternal bond has universally, or even generally, produced the good for which it is alike intended and adapted. The remaining corruption of human nature has done much to prevent the full development of these benefits. The fact is one of a deplorable kind, but it is manifest to all men.

We have then only to hint at some of the benefits which Christian fraternity is intended to secure ; giving thanks to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in so large a degree they have been realized in all ages ; and mourning over the ignorance, pride, or perverseness (chiefly if we find them in ourselves),

which have caused so much of coldness, jealousy, and division in the "household of faith."

Christian fraternity should secure *brotherly love*. "Love as brethren," says the apostle Peter, "be pitiful and courteous." 1 Peter iii. 8.

The description of true Christian love which has been given by another apostle (1 Cor. xiii.), is familiar to every mind. O that it were more generally and perfectly reduced to practice!—"Charity," that is love, "suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." Such is the love which ought to subsist among all the members of the "household of faith." All should love and be loved, because all are the children of God. "By this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before God," 1 John iii. 19. And every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him.

Christian sympathy is another benefit which our Christian brotherhood is designed to secure. All believers in Christ form, as we have seen, one holy family, one mystical body. And as in the natural body, so here; if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. If one part of the bodily frame were racked with violent anguish, we might certainly conclude that another part, to which no feeling of sympathy extended, was in a mortified state, no longer part of the living

frame. And we as living Christians are called to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rules like these have indeed often been abused. Domestic privacy, and even the sacred solitude of sorrow, have been invaded by a certain class of Christians, under the pretence of sympathy, but evidently for the sake of gratifying an Athenian love of "hearing, or telling some new thing." But the truly refined and consistent Christian will at once avoid such an evil, and at the same time manifest the warmest sympathy in all the joys and sorrows of his brethren in Christ. For this they are brethren.

Sympathy should produce *succour*. This is indeed its design and natural fruit. It is the result and proof of a proper feeling which exists within the breast. That is a worthless sentimentality which will readily weep over the distresses of a fellow Christian ; but, however great the ability, will do no more. "We are called to bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2. We are to remember "those who are in bonds as bound with them, and those who suffer adversity as being ourselves also in the body." Heb. xiii. 2. We are to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, to do good to all as we have opportunity, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal. vi. 10.

Christian fraternity is designed *to afford to the world, a spectacle of the most attractive kind*, and thus to induce men to forsake what is evil, and to yield their hearts and lives to God. Very sweet is the spectacle of true fraternity. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for

brethren to dwell together in unity!" Ps. cxxxiii. It is said that in the early ages of Christianity the heathen were accustomed to exclaim with wonder, "See how these Christians love one another!" None can estimate the influence which a loving church, a loving family, or even one Christian of a loving temper, may exert on the world around. This is a temper which recommends to all the religion of the Bible. "By this," said our Lord, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another." To those Christians who live in the consistent maintenance of brotherly love, anxious, enquiring persons from the world may be expected to say, "We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you."

Is the reader a member of this holy and blessed brotherhood? We would entreat him to maintain the spirit of brotherly love. He may do this by carefully reading the Divine word, and implicitly following the directions which it contains; by remembering our elder brother, the Divine Saviour, who for us shed his blood, and who now lives to intercede for us at the right hand of God; and by cherishing the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love. Thus will his religion be undoubted, for "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Thus, too, will it acquire an amnience and an influence for good unknown to all but the loving Christian. "Let brotherly love continue," and all other holy excellences will prosper, for love buildeth up.

Temptations to the violation of Christian unity, and the indulgence of a spirit the very opposite of fraternal, we shall assuredly meet. They will arise from various

sources, but chiefly from those diversities and controversies which mark the various sections of the Church of Christ. But "let us consider: we are professedly, going to heaven, that region of light, and life, and purity, and love. It well, indeed, becomes them who are on the way thither, modestly to inquire after truth. Humble, serious, diligent endeavours to increase in divine knowledge are very suitable to our present state of darkness and imperfection. The product of such inquiries we shall carry to heaven with us. We shall carry truth, and the knowledge of God to heaven with us; we shall carry purity thither, devotedness of soul to God and our Redeemer, divine love and joy, if we have their beginnings here,—with whatsoever else of real permanent excellency that hath a settled, fixed seat and place in our souls now, and shall then have them in perfection.

"But do we think we shall carry strife to heaven? shall we carry anger to heaven? envyings, heart-burnings, animosities, enmities, hatred of our brethren and fellow Christians—shall we carry these to heaven with us?

"Let us labour to divest ourselves, and strike off from our spirits, every thing that shall not go with us to heaven, or is equally unsuitable to our end and way; that there may be nothing to obstruct and hinder our abundant entrance at length into the everlasting kingdom." *

O that men, misled by the phantom which the world calls "fraternity," and wearied in its pursuit, would enter this hallowed association. Here are green pas-

* John Howe.—Works, vol. iii, pp. 154-5.

tures, and the still waters of salvation. Here all may be tranquillity while the storms rage without. Here "the peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Here are enjoyed the clusters of Canaan, the foretastes and pledges of that world where all the brethren in Christ will meet, and every heart be filled with love.

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CHAPTER V.

EQUALITY.

"The rich and poor meet together."—Prov. xxii. 2.

THE topic on the discussion of which we now enter is one closely connected, like the two foregoing, with many of the peculiar features and struggles of the present day. It is, however, one in relation to which only a portion of what is termed "the world" would be concerned to encounter the views consistently maintained from the word of God by any faithful minister of the gospel. Within the breasts of a large number of mankind, and in the honest interests of a still larger, are found strong arguments in favour of at least a part of the truth on this deeply interesting subject; although, at the same time, they may entertain little love or reverence for many other features of the teaching of revelation.

Every one is aware that statements have often been put forth, and claims advanced, in tones of the most peremptory kind, in favour of a perfect and universal equality amongst the inhabitants of any given country. No man, according to the doctrines to which we refer, has any right to be more wealthy, more honoured, or more influential than his neighbours. All should be found occupying a common level; nor should any be allowed to rise higher unless he carried all others with

him. "No man has a right to a superfluity while any other man is in want of necessities."* To produce a state of things like this has been one great and avowed object of Socialism, the daring pretensions and efforts of which excited, even in our own land, general dismay, until, through the mercy of our God, they proved a total failure. Private property was mentioned by the English apostle of that system as one of the "trinity of curses," to which might be attributed all the evils under which mankind groan; the other two "curses" being, in his view, marriage and religion. The astounding impiety of doctrines like these, together with the violence of their propagators, and the notorious immoralities of many who received them, may be assigned as among the causes of their comparatively slight success in this highly favoured land.

But in other countries, less distinguished by the prevalence of true religion, such doctrines continue to be propagated, and with far greater prospect of success, at the present hour.

In France, notwithstanding those fluctuations of feeling which are of constant occurrence, these sentiments exert a widely extended influence. They resemble some vast volcano, the surface of which is incessantly heaving, and from which the flames ever and anon are seen darting forth; affording at the same time indications which cannot be misunderstood as to the nature of the substratum, and awful warning to all who live within its circuit. No one who is at all acquainted with the character of the RED republicans of France, can doubt but that at any moment there may occur in that unhappy

* Eugène Sue.

land a catastrophe by which, as in former days, all classes of society may be involved in one common vortex of ruin, terror, and blood.

The advocates of such views have always consisted of a few clever, artful, and unprincipled leaders, and of thousands who are their disciples and their dupes ; ignorant men, for the most part unused to habits of thought, and totally unacquainted with that from which their system receives a complete refutation—the history of the past. But, leaders and followers, with scarcely an exception they are reckless men, men who have nothing to lose by any change which may occur, men totally devoid of religious principle, and whose sole praise is that they make no pretensions to its possession. The mass of reputable persons in all lands have too much good sense, and too deep an interest at stake, thus to be misled ; we may add with thankfulness, that in this country they have too firm a belief in the Bible to receive doctrines which are essentially at variance with it.

In the present brief essay it will suffice if we offer a few plain and obvious considerations in reference to the class of sentiments to which we have just alluded. That less pleasing task accomplished, we may dwell at greater length on the equality which true religion recognizes and maintains. That there is such an equality, we have no more doubt than we have of the fact that the system, miscalled Socialism, has not the slightest affinity for it.

In reference to the kind of equality for which many worldly persons are thus found contending, the remark will not be thought wanting in significance, that we have

sought in vain for any text in the word of God which seems to embody such an idea, in the way either of commendation or of reproof. Universal equality is a thing of which the Bible does not contain the slightest hint. The motto which we have selected for this essay, makes perhaps the nearest approach to anything of the kind, but it will be seen at a glance to be directly opposed to the system we have in view; for, while it speaks of rich and poor meeting together—resembling one another in several important points—it still preserves the distinction, and does not hint at any amalgamation of the two classes for the production of a third, distinguished neither by poverty nor riches. The idea of universal equality thus appears to be a conception of these last times; the offspring of a licentiousness which was unknown in those ages wherein the Bible was written.

We proceed however to the suggestion of a few considerations by which the folly and the miserable tendency of such views may be made apparent.

The first is, that universal equality is a thing which never has been, and never can be, realized. No two men are perfectly equal. He who made us has seen fit to ordain differences between man and man, such as must for ever render the name of equality, used in this sense, a mockery. Even a superficial view of mankind will suffice to assure us of the truth of this statement; and a more prolonged and attentive observation will certainly issue in the deep conviction that there is really, and can be, no such thing as perfect equality between man and man. If in some particular case we imagine that we behold it, a more accurate search will convince us that it existed but in appearance. There

were some latent qualities, not at first perceived, which produce a wide difference between the two whom for a moment we thought equal. And these differences are, in many cases, such as we cannot refuse to attribute to the direct will of the Creator, without falling into utter infidelity. One man has perfect health continued through the greater part of a century, while another, without any fault of his own, never knows a day's perfect freedom from pain. One has the muscular power of a giant, another is feeble from his very birth. One has vast skill, the readiness of adapting himself to circumstances, seizing upon ideas, and reducing them to practice for his own benefit, or that of others; his neighbour is utterly devoid of the power to plan or execute. No amount of education would make some men acute or learned; such is the native power of others that the entire absence of early advantages, and the existence of difficulties the most formidable, are not able to keep them from the attainment of the highest honours. While, then, the bodily strength and mental energy of men—their original power and the facility of improvement—are so greatly varied, and that by a power over which they have no control, the favourite doctrine of Socialism is manifestly absurd. Reduce, if it were possible, all men to one common level to-day, before to-morrow the elements of existing grades would all be again in operation. Force of character, intellectual superiority, mechanical skill, bodily power and industry, would be again beginning to elevate their possessors, while those who possessed them not, in like proportion, would begin to sink. The sovereign allotments of Divine

Providence must ever prevent an equality such as the socialist desires.

Our next remark is, that, as the providence, so the *word* of God is in direct opposition to such views. Repeatedly is the distinction between rich and poor recognized in that divinely inspired book which is the supreme authority. "The poor," it was said by Moses, "the poor shall never cease out of the land," Deut. xv. 11. And he spoke of a land in which all the elements of fertility and plenty were marvellously blended, and where, in the first instance, a portion was assigned to every Israelite. "The poor," said One greater than Moses, "the poor have ye always with you," Mark xiv. 7. And as to *station*, so far from inculcating universal equality, the word of God teaches the duty of subjects to obey, and to pray for, their rulers; of children to honour and obey their parents; of servants to be in subjection to those who are their masters. It teaches no less faithfully the corresponding duties of rulers to their subjects, parents to their children, and masters to their servants. The Bible recognizes universal relationship, mutual obligation and dependence, between the children of men, but not equality. He who would establish this must first abolish the Bible. The writer is able to state a fact signally illustrative of this point. Many years since, when the person with whose name Socialism has, in this country, been most identified, was but beginning to agitate his political theories, he called on a member of the Society of Friends, well known in the metropolis and in the county of Sussex for his devoted benevolence, in order to secure his approval and aid. The conference

continued till midnight, when the Christian said to his visitor, "If I understand the matter rightly, the great obstacle in the way of these views and plans is—the Bible?" "Exactly so," was the candid reply; "we should have little difficulty if that were out of the way." He was right. The Bible made all the difference between the warm-hearted philanthropist and the socialist chief.

We add one further remark. All the attempts which have been made to produce socialist equality have signally failed, and most of them have been marked in their failure by bitter disappointment, universal confusion, rapine and cruelty of the most frightful kind, and a misery which has out-lived even the third and fourth generations. More than a million of human beings perished in the great French revolution, victims to the notion of equality. The possession of either property or rank was the surest passport to the guillotine. In the same cause several thousands died during the year 1848. How many more are doomed to bleed before *true* liberty shall be established, true religion loved, in that unhappy land, God only knows!

In the United States, the theory of equality (except as to property) is maintained; and, notwithstanding many practical deviations from it (without which, indeed, no peace or order could be maintained), the consequences have often been terrific. Private and popular anger may be witnessed breaking forth into outrages which the laws are equally impotent to restrain and to punish.

Some few religious fanatics have at different times endeavoured to establish the principles of equality and communism. We may instance those who were called, in

the time of the English commonwealth, "Fifth monarchy men," and the still more violent "Munster Anabaptists." Such men have not only always failed, and that in the most signal manner, to accomplish their designs, but have committed in their course atrocities the most flagrant, and, passing away, have left behind them names which are for "an abhorring to all flesh."

We turn with pleasure from this theme; only beseeching the youthful reader to beware of the fascinating imposture, often so attractive to the ardent and inexperienced. In the bright firmament above us there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; and one star differeth from another star in glory. In heaven itself there are thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. And on earth, while the religion of the Bible inculcates on all classes the utmost kindness, sympathy, and mutual succour, it teaches all to be satisfied with that sphere of life to which the providence of God has called them; forbids all to covet anything which is their neighbour's, whether property, or station, or honours; and it commands all in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves.

And yet, while the equality which ignorance, pride, or covetousness demands is thus unequivocally condemned by reason, by the Bible, and by experience, there is, as we stated in the outset, an equality fully recognized in the word of God. To the explanation of this we next proceed. Wherein may the rich and poor be properly said to meet together? We reply, All men are equally entitled to *civil and social rights*, until they have forfeited them by crime.

God has given *life* to all, and the life of the poorest

and meanest man ought to be as inviolable as that of the most wealthy. God has made all men *free*. And to freedom, in the legitimate sense of that word, all men are equally entitled ; the poor as well as the rich ; *the black as much as the white*. O when shall this latter truth be admitted in that great republic which, from the leading principles of its constitution, ought to be the first to defend it, instead of the last to bid the oppressed go free ! All men have a claim upon the government under which they live for protection in the enjoyment of their lawful property, and in the pursuit of such happiness as does not interfere with that of other men. No matter, we repeat it, what may be a man's colour ; no matter how great his poverty ; to these natural rights he has an equal claim with the most dignified or wealthy of his fellow men.

Of these natural rights, slavery, as we just now hinted, constitutes one atrocious violation ; the persecution so often practised towards people of colour, although nominally free, is a second ; and a third may be found in the wanton invasion sometimes made by civilized nations upon those whom they choose to deem barbarians. The Bible throws the shield of its protection over these natural rights, and teaches us that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth. Here there is equality. Here the rich and poor meet together.

All men are equal, *in comparison with the Maker of all*. In his sight the distinctions of wealth and rank, which subsist between man and man, are as nothing. The distance between the Majesty of heaven and the most exalted of mortals, is infinite. Hence, in this

respect, all men are as on a common level ; in his sight “men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity,” Ps. lxii. 9. “Before Him all nations are as nothing, and they are accounted in his sight less than nothing and vanity. Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. He sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. He bringeth the princes to nothing. He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Isa. xl. 15—24.

It is granted, that in the sight of God *moral* distinctions between man and man are recognized. On the character of some He looks with ineffable complacency ; and on that of others with utter contempt and indignation : but with this exception,—little considered, alas ! by the majority of mankind,—with this exception, all men are equal before God, for this simple reason, that in comparison with his majesty, power, riches, wisdom, universal glory, all men are as nothing. Hence He is no respecter of persons ; he has nothing to hope nor anything to fear, from any of his creatures ; nor, with the exception already named, and that the result of his own gracious interposition, can he find, in one more than another, any object of complacent regard. Hence, too, we may infer the amazing folly and exceeding sinfulness of pride, especially when brought into the immediate presence of the supreme God. The short-lived distinctions of which men are apt to boast, how worthless are they when thus considered in their proper light ! This, then, is the second point of equality. It is not that the poor and mean become less so, but that in comparison

with those of the Most High God, the utmost wealth, and power, and glory of men, sink into utter insignificance. There is obviously, therefore, nothing gratifying to the pride of either the actually great, or the aspiring and envious low, in such an equality.

In several of the *circumstances and events connected with this present state of being* we may again observe universal equality. All enter the world in the same weak, helpless, uninformed, dependent state; the child of a monarch and of a beggar are equal in this respect; all are exposed to various calamities in the passage through life; sickness assails without respect of persons; no amount of wealth can prevent the insidious seizure of consumption; neuralgia may rack every nerve of the head that wears a coronet; bereavement visits the households of the great, as well as the families of the poor and mean; death, too, comes alike to all; the utmost which can be done, by the means and appliances of wealth, is to retard the fatal blow; we must all die. The living, whatever their station or possessions, the living know that they must die. Here again the rich and poor meet together. They that be fat upon earth, and those who move as in the dust, alike bow before the king of terrors, and none can keep alive his own soul. Ps. xlix. 6 to 12; xxii. 29. All are equally left in uncertainty as to the time of this dread visitation, and the means by which their removal from earth shall be accomplished. Very recently one of the most illustrious statesmen of modern times has succumbed beneath a sudden stroke, with as little premonition of its approach, and as little ability to resist its power, as the unknown railway labourer, on whom the mighty mass has fallen.

Here then is another illustration of human equality ; the great events of life happen alike to all. Eccles. ii. iii.

In regard to the *need of salvation* there is equality between all men. We do not affirm that all have sinned alike; this were to contradict individual consciousness, undoubted fact, and the testimony of the Bible. All have not sinned alike, but all have sinned ; all have not descended to the same depths of iniquity, but all are sinners. Hence all stand in need of salvation, and equally so. The lightest amount of sin is sufficient to ruin the soul which has committed it ; there is, in this respect, no difference ; " All have come short of the glory of God." All, both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rich and poor, all are under sin. Hence all are condemned, and liable to future woe. Many popular errors in religion, both theoretical and practical, may be traced to ignorance or carelessness as to the standard by which the Judge of all the earth estimates sin. Too commonly men take their own standard, and not that which may be formed from his holy word. Hence, little is regarded as sinful but that of which human laws take cognizance with a view to punishment. Society is, in consequence, thought to consist of only two classes—the moral and the vicious ; and there is ample room for those who assign to themselves a place in the former class, to adopt the language of the pharisee—" God, I thank thee that I am not as others." Would they diligently study the declarations of God's holy word, such language would never pass their lips again, but, joining with unfeigned humility, penitence, and *equality*, the very publican, they would be constrained to pray—" God be merciful to me a sinner !" The Bible leads us to conclusions most startling

and offensive to human pride, which, when assuming the form of *pride of character*, is most reluctant to yield to the righteousness of God. Take the teachings of truth, and you will find that "the thought of foolishness" indulged and loved "is sin." Prov. xxiv 9. There may be sin in the *desire* and *intention*, as well as in the actual accomplishment of evil; so that many an unperformed deed of villainy may be written down against men in the Book which will be opened at last (Rev. xx. 12), because it was fully in their hearts and purposes to commit it; and the opportunity only was wanting, Matt. vi. 28. There may be sin in the *motive* when the conduct is unblameably correct. This is indeed a standard of judgment which the Searcher of hearts only is competent to adopt. We are bound to judge from the conduct to the motive. He can and does reverse this, and, according as the motive was good or bad, accept the conduct or condemn it as sinful. Hence much which is highly esteemed with men is an abomination to Him. A splendid contribution to the cause of charity or of religion may be a splendid sin: and when men go up to the solemn assembly, and comfort themselves with the thought of religious duty discharged, He may be asking—Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? There are sins of *omission* as well as sins of commission. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin." James iv. 17. He who saw a fellow man in circumstances of fatal peril, from which he might deliver him without injury to himself, and who should in such circumstances refuse to interpose, might not be amenable to human laws, but by the laws of God he would be as guilty of the death of that unconscious

man, as if he had brought it about by actual violence. And lastly, there are sins *against God*, as well as against man. The conviction of multitudes is, that they are safe, because they fill up the relative conditions of life with justice and kindness, they are good subjects, citizens, husbands, parents, or masters. All this is well. But God too has his claims. And the man who does not love, serve, honour, and obey him with all the powers of his nature, is a sinner in his sight, let his outward conduct be what it may. "This is the first and great commandment." Let these remarks be collected ; let it be remembered that we commit sin not only in grosser outward acts, but also by unholy desires and intentions, by allowing the influence of sinful motives, by leaving undone what we ought to do, and by failures in regard to our duties towards God : let all these things be borne in mind, and the solemn statement of St. James duly weighed, that "he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all;" and it must of necessity be felt that all men are equal here. The whole world is become guilty before God ; all are equally unable to work out a salvation for themselves. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God ; all have need to cry mightily to Him for mercy, if haply it may be found ; mercy to pardon, to purify, to save, to bless. All, all are equal here.

And once more, all are *equally welcome to the salvation* which is in Christ Jesus. His gospel is to be preached to every creature—his grace is infinite in the extent and diversity of its application—his salvation is alike rich and free. No restriction confines it to high or low, learned or rude, Jew or Gentile, barbarian, Scythian,

bond or free. He is able to save to the uttermost, and has evidently delighted to display his power and grace in the salvation of those whom men would deem the least likely among all classes of mankind. All may come to Him, for his gracious invitations are unequivocally addressed to all. And all who do come to him are secure of a reception the most gracious. "For this cause," says one who calls himself the chief of sinners, "for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 16. He himself has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." John vi. 37. And it is written, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 13. All who come to Him are sure to find a cordial welcome and abounding mercy. His grace which is "unto all, is upon all them that believe." Rom. iii. 22. The power of his arm is exerted for all, the love of his heart rests upon all. Thrice blessed equality! little valued by the world. Thrice happy they who are equal because indebted to Christ for all things, and alike receiving out of his fullness grace for grace! Together they lie prostrate at his cross. Together they worship at his footstool. His throne of grace is open to all alike. Within his house the distinctions of worldly rank are unknown. "The brother of low degree is exalted, and the rich is made low." James i. 9—11. In the world, we occupy the different stations in which He has been pleased to place us: in the church we meet as penitent believers, worshipping our common Father, joining in the same confession of sin, and acknowledging our common and

equal obligations to sovereign mercy. Together we journey to that house above, where a welcome equally gracious awaits every true Christian.

The equality of fact and of the Bible is a thing then rather humbling than gratifying to the pride of man. But it is a good thing. Let the reader leave worldly politicians to their dreams and struggles, while he labours to secure an interest in the loving heart of Christ, and in that peaceful heavenly home, where the rich and poor meet together, and meet to part no more.

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CHAPTER VI.

PHILANTHROPY.

"Who went about doing good."—Acts x. 38.

PHILANTHROPY is love to man—to man as he really exists: sincere, ardent, unselfish love. If this definition be correct, we may readily perceive that it is a thing widely different from much which bears the name.

A person possessed of the highly poetic temperament, for instance, may create a gorgeous vision, may delineate a creature pure, noble, altogether perfect, may call it *man*, and then employ his pen in words of glowing and idolatrous praise for the creature of his own ideal production, and, it may be, yield up his heart to the feeling of intense and rapturous admiration: and all without one spark of true philanthropy.

Another, an impassioned orator, may describe in terms of deepest indignation the wrongs inflicted on certain classes of the community, may affirm and eulogize his own readiness to die in the cause which he proclaims to be that of the people—of humanity; may excite his audience to a state of desperate determination, so that they shall readily do whatever he bids them; and all without one particle of true philanthropy.

Very many have proclaimed themselves friends of the human species, whose pretensions have evidently nothing

substantial on which to rest. Self-love, in one or other of the numerous forms in which it takes possession of the human heart, has too frequently been the source of what has passed for genuine philanthropy.

But all is not deceptive. There is a noble feeling, the source of a line of conduct no less truly noble, which really deserves this honoured appellation. True philanthropy is a thing the excellence of which no right-minded person can question. It is replete with good both to those who possess it, and to those on whose behalf it is felt and exerted. Hence, notwithstanding all the mistakes which exist—notwithstanding the opposition it may sometimes encounter—it is a thing generally admired and applauded.

The true philanthropist—the sincere lover of his race, honours man as man; seeks the real welfare of his fellow creatures; is ready to do, and to bear, and to deny himself much, in order that he may really benefit those who are around him. Such a man is truly noble and happy. His life is a continued proof that nothing of a selfish kind forms the source of his actions. His own present convenience is often set aside for the sake of another's welfare. He lives to do good. Nor is such a course destitute of a present reward. To be useful is felt to be a blessing of no common order. To make others happy, is to secure a large amount of happiness for himself. While others are seeking happiness, and seek it in vain, he finds it unsought in the discharge of those duties which love to man lays upon him. The forgetfulness of self to which he has in some measure attained, forms no inconsiderable source of exalted satisfaction. Such a man lives in the esteem and affections

of his fellow men, and in the grateful recollections, especially, of the objects of his kindness; and when at length he passes from this world, sincere lamentations are uttered by survivors. His loss is felt—severely felt; and this is one of the strongest possible proofs of his excellence.

To a course of pure philanthropy, founded on correct principles, and pursued in a thoroughly Christian spirit, it is our wish to urge the reader, especially if he be still young; for his own sake, as well as for the welfare of many others, we would affectionately and urgently entreat him to make it his own.

But where shall true philanthropy be found? We are constrained again to insist on the great principle laid down by our Lord and Saviour, that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. We shall not find it in the world, or where the religion of the Bible is a thing unknown, unloved. It must be the fruit of genuine piety. The tree under whose shadow the weary find shelter, of whose fruit the needy partake, and whose leaves are for healing to the sick and sorrowing—must be planted by the river of the water of life, which issues from the throne of God. In the garden of the Lord it must grow. None but a tree of his own right-hand planting will be thus blessed. The true philanthropist must be a sincere Christian. Let this consideration prove one powerful motive, among many, leading the youthful reader to seek the attainment of sincere, evangelical piety. He will be really a lover of his race only in proportion to the love he bears to Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good, and to the efforts which he makes to resemble him.

Pursuing a plan somewhat similar to that observed in our previous chapters, we detain the reader for a few moments from the more Christian view of this subject, while offering certain remarks on the attitude of the world towards true philanthropy.

It is a fact to which we first invite attention, that until Christianity became diffused, the world contained no exhibition whatever of the love of man to his fellow man ; and that neither is there any such exhibition now to be found in regions where the gospel is unknown.

Among the old warlike nations you might have found in vast abundance and variety the engines of cruelty, the means of inflicting pain, the instruments designed for the destruction of life ; but in vain would you have sought for a single plan, invention, or suggestion, designed to make men happy, to bind up the broken spirit, or even to heal the wounded body. In the very height of her power and glory, and throughout an empire of all but boundless extent, Rome did not contain a single almshouse, infirmary, or hospital ; not the least provision was made for the sick, the wounded, the insane, or the aged ; not the slightest effort of a benevolent kind for the alleviation of human misery in any of its countless forms.

And if we next look to lands where, at the present hour, the gospel of Christ is unknown or uninfluential, a no less dreary and saddening spectacle is presented. You find infanticide fearfully prevalent ; the youthful blossoms of the human race destroyed without remorse : you find the aged and helpless treated with cold neglect or barbarous cruelty, left to starve as in South Africa, or stifled with the mud of the Ganges as in our own

eastern possessions. You find men shedding the blood of their fellow men without one particle of remorse—apparently without any consciousness of guilt. You find an evident and fiendish delight taken in the infliction of the keenest possible tortures: but in vain do you look for even the appearance of an attempt to do good, either by removing misery, or by conferring happiness. We appeal to the past and the present for abundant proof that where the gospel is unknown, philanthropy is unknown also.

The next remark is, that Christian efforts to do good have been generally opposed by worldly men, until opposition has become altogether useless. What philanthropic suggestion was ever thrown out without being, in the first instance, ridiculed as chimerical and worthless? Then, as the prospect of success has begun to appear, direct opposition succeeded to ridicule—opposition, often associated with slander of the foulest kind on those who had proved themselves the friends of man. Then, when success became certain, and was indeed on the point of realization, came the slow and reluctant conversion of those who had little sympathy with the movement, but were sufficiently willing to share the glory. Thus, for instance, it was when British Christians combined in opposition, first to the slave-trade, and afterwards to slavery itself. In both instances ridicule, censure, slander, and direct opposition were encountered by those true philanthropists, and that at the hands of some who afterwards, at the eleventh hour, joined their ranks.

Further, when occasional attempts to do good have been made by worldly men, they have been but feeble

imitations of what Christianity had done before. Hence there has generally been some great defect, some gross impropriety, or some evidently selfish and unworthy motive, marking such schemes. In regard to colonization, and all similar enterprizes, we have need to watch closely the spirit and proceedings of worldly-minded men. The plan was some years since formed to institute a colony of free coloured people on the coast of Africa, the colonists being men restored to the land of their fathers from the United States of America. Even good men were for a season beguiled by the plan as one of true benevolence, until the avowal was frankly made that the real motive was the wish to remove a free coloured people from the midst of those who regarded them as a nuisance, and laws began to be passed for the purpose of compelling them to emigrate. And in other instances, and probably with far more sincere intention to do good, real injury has been inflicted on the rights and happiness of mankind through the mistakes of a philanthropy, most imperfect because not Christian.

One other remark must be made. The tastes and supposed interests of the world have generally conducted it in a direction the very opposite of philanthropic. Whenever the rage for what is termed "glory" has obtained—when the lust of territory has seemed to realize an opportunity of self-gratification—or when the proud or angry passions of man's evil nature have been stimulated—the world has deemed the slaughter of myriads a trifle, and the utter, hopeless misery of millions more, nothing deserving attention.

The world's great men are Alexander, Cæsar, and others who, like them, have gratified their selfish am

bition by the destruction of human happiness and life on a scale immensely wide. Such are the men who would still awaken curiosity, excite admiration, and receive eager homage in every country under heaven. The character of the supposed hero is still far more highly esteemed by the world than that of the real philanthropist.

The inventor of an apparatus for the more easy and effectual destruction of human life was rewarded, even by our own country, with a pension of the first class. The inventor of the safety-lamp, by which thousands of lives have unquestionably been saved while engaged in the miner's perilous occupation, never received for that blessing to mankind the slightest national recompense.

The metropolitan cathedral of our native land contains the statues of many warriors, and the mouldering banners which celebrate their victories hang there; but few and far between are the memorials of those who have laboured in the spirit of true philanthropy to do good to mankind.

Enough, however, and perhaps more than enough has been adduced to show that philanthropy is not natural to man, or common amongst worldly-minded persons. Instances of great benevolence may indeed be occasionally found amongst those who are apparently destitute of true religion. These are, however, manifestly exceptions. They tend rather to establish than to impugn the general principle. Moreover, if not directly, they may indirectly spring from Christianity. Its influence and its examples often tell on those whose hearts are not really the seat of vital religion. Further: many qualifications may be discovered in some

of these cases; and in others, circumstances which, attentively considered, would effectually prevent your regarding them as the genuine fruit of worldly principle. We should be disposed to go further than this; and rather to infer from the presence of pure and ardent love to man, and the cheerful endurance of self-denial for the sake of doing good, the presence of genuine religious principle, of whose existence, however, we had no other evidence, than to believe that such good fruit could have sprung from the corrupt root of a worldly character. Our Lord has said that "the tree is known by its fruits;" it is therefore at least far more in unison with his teaching to infer the religious principle from the pure and benevolent life, than to believe that the latter can exist in entire dissociation from the former.

Enough, however, has been said on this subject, and we turn to view, in the religion of Jesus Christ, true philanthropy in its real origin and full and consistent development. Two or three distinct, but all deeply interesting and important, views may be taken of love to man as thus displayed in connexion with the religion of Jesus.

We may first survey it *in the spirit and conduct of its great Exemplar*. The pure and unselfish love of poor, frail, sinful man drew down the Lord of glory from heaven to earth; arrayed him in a frail body like our own; surrounded him with poverty; covered him with shame; exposed him to contempt and blasphemy; crowned him with thorns; and finally brought him to the cross. He loved us, and gave himself for us. His whole life on earth was a life of love to man. In the comprehensive and very striking language of St. Peter, "he went about

doing good." The modes and channels of his beneficence were varied as the wants, and sufferings, and sorrows of those by whom He was surrounded. "He went," says the evangelist Matthew, "He went through the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. And when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." Matt. ix. 35, 36. Take another most affecting extract from the gospel narrative. "In the same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight. Then Jesus answering said to the messengers of John, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." Luke vii. 21, 22. Here was the original and perfect model of all true philanthropy. Such was the course of his public life. It was a scene of perpetual beneficence. The sight poured upon darkened eye-balls; the susceptibility of sound bestowed on the ear which had long been insensible to its influence; the food of which the hungry thousands ate in the wilderness; the son restored to his widowed mother from the arms of death, and the very margin of the grave: the tears shed at the grave of Lazarus, while by-standers exclaimed, "Behold, how he loved him!" his nightly watchings, his daily prayers, were all so many exhibitions of divine philanthropy, so many proofs of the love of Jesus to the wretched and the lost.

But the climax of love to man is found in his death, and its attendant circumstances. Think of his anguish in the garden ; think of his calm endurance at the bar of judgment. See him agonizing on the cross. His vital blood is shed. His piercing, dying cry is heard. He dies from love to man. Risen from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God, he is still the friend of man. In his royal heart each of us has a brother's interest. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. For us he intercedes with his heavenly Father, and pours down upon us of the riches of his grace, and especially the best gift—the influences of his Holy Spirit. While we look to Jesus for the salvation of our souls, let us learn to admire and love divine philanthropy.

We may next survey it in the repeated *exhortations and precepts of the gospel*. These are indeed all included in the statement that Christ has left us an example that we should follow his steps. All his people are to endeavour to be like him. They cannot, indeed, exert miraculous powers, still less is it within their province or their ability to shed their blood for others in order to the salvation of their souls ; but what they can do to promote the happiness or holiness of their fellow-men, that they are bound to do, by the example of Him whose they are and whom they serve. But we may state more specifically some of the precepts of that holy book which all true Christians take for their guide. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men," Gal. vi. 10. "For none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself," Rom. xiv. 7. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Luke x. 27. The parable of the good Samaritan is designed to teach us the

extent and meaning of the term "neighbour," and the methods in which our neighbourly love may be evinced. "Honour all men," is the precept given through the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Be ye children of your Father which is in heaven, for he doeth good to all, making his sun to shine and his rain to descend on the evil and the good, the unjust and the just, the unthankful and those who are grateful for his mercy. Such is the substance of a precept more than once delivered, with some variations, by our blessed Lord. Matt. v. Luke vi. The sentiment is presented in a variety of forms in his discourses. "Ye are," said He, to his disciples, "the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world." Matt. v. 13, 14. The salt is to diffuse the savour which it possesses, that thus other bodies may be preserved from putrefaction. The light is to shine, that those who have it not may see, and be blessed; and that in their present and eternal well-being the God of Christians may be glorified. What religion does for us we are to do for others: what it is to us we are to become to them. "Godliness," we are told, "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. iv. 8. Those who are sincere Christians have realized the truth of this statement: they possess the present, and have reason confidently to look for the future blessings which the religion of Jesus is designed to impart. In them ignorance has been dispelled, and in a great measure by the studies they have pursued, the lessons they have learned, in the school of Christ. They have been preserved from sinful acts and habits, in which many around them indulge to their present as well as their eternal detri-

ment. They have privileges, immunities, comforts, joys, which they cannot for a moment hesitate to refer to the religion which they love. And they have a hope full of immortality, a sense of the blessedness of acceptance with God, peace with Him, His strength in weakness, His comforts in adversity, His favour in life and death. All these blessings—both temporal and spiritual, Christians are required, both by the example of Christ and by the precepts of His word, to diffuse as widely as possible. To make known the gospel that souls may be saved, is, indeed, the most important part of their duty; but it is only a part. If a pang can be assuaged, a chain broken, a superstition exposed, a comfort bestowed, there can be no question as to the obligation resting on the Christian. For asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?" he has only the example of the first murderer to plead. How solemn is the admonition, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not. Doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? And shall he not render to every man according to his works?" Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

Such is Christian philanthropy as taught in the Bible. It must respect the present well-being of men, or it fails in conformity to the example of Him who fed the hungry and healed the sick: but it must also be directed to the salvation of the soul, or it leaves the most important work undone, it neglects obedience to the Saviour's last command, "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" it is, in a word, not Christian. This appears to us a vital defect in some

of the most popular and influential literature of the present day. However we may rejoice in the powerful and persevering efforts therein made to awaken us to a proper sense of the duty of instructing the ignorant, rousing the indolent, showing to the improvident a more excellent way, and presenting to all the sons of wretchedness the elements of health and comfort, we cannot but regret that such minds and such pens should stop here. That Christian discharges very imperfectly his duty to his fellow men who contents himself with securing the dissemination of Christian doctrines (by means, for instance, of a missionary society) while he makes no effort to remove the degradation and wretchedness which are around his own dwelling: but assuredly there is far greater imperfection in the philanthropic efforts of those who would do good to the animal and intellectual parts of man, but practically ignore the fact, that he has a soul to be saved. To both parties, it may be said, in the language of Christ, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Here, then, is evidently seen one important design of true religion. It is intended to make every man a blessing to his fellow men. If you find an irreligious man selfish—insensible to the wants and woes of others—you feel no surprise. You charge him not with any inconsistency. You feel that he is acting only in accordance with sentiments which are too pleasing to our fallen nature. But you feel at once that a selfish Christian, a Christian not a lover of his race (if such a combination of ideas be possible), is a grossly inconsistent man. He does not answer the end of his calling. He

does not obey the precepts of the word he professes to believe. He is not like Christ.

And let us further survey, *in actual exercise*, the philanthropy thus taught by the example of Christ, as well as inculcated in his holy word. It is, and has been in every past age, a grand and living reality. Think of the glorious company of the apostles ; remember the sacrifices they cheerfully made ; the toils they joyfully endured ; the cruel sufferings and frightful deaths they encountered ; and all this, so far as this world is concerned, simply that they might execute the benevolent designs of their Divine Master, and do good to men around them. Look down the page of history, and you will observe, keeping pace with the increasing spread and influence of Christianity, a gradual improvement in the condition of mankind. Besides its noblest, its interior work, Christianity has been for ages pouring a tide of temporal and external benefits on mankind, through the agency of its sincere and consistent disciples. It has thus repressed the atrocities of war, and is preparing for their total cessation. It has introduced mercy into criminal punishments. It has guarded the lives and liberties of men. At the present moment, thousands of the followers of Christ are engaged in rescuing men from the deep degradation of idolatry, and the ineffable miseries of slavery : others are employed in ministering to their temporal wants. They have raised, and are still raising, asylums for the sick, the aged, the infant orphan, the idiot, the maniac, and the blind ; they have ever, on the one hand, fearlessly denounced the crimes of oppressors in exalted stations, and, on the other, rebuked the frantic fury, the licentious ex-

cesses of the multitude. Let us think of the gratuitous instruction given in the sabbath school to millions, by persons, the majority of whom labour all the week for their daily bread, and yet cheerfully devote a part of their precious sabbath rest to this self-denying work, having, like their Divine Master, compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. How noble a specimen of true philanthropy! And if you investigate any really useful effort for either the bodily or mental welfare of men, you will find it emanating from, and mainly sustained by, Christian principle, Christian liberality, Christian industry. Ragged schools, city missions, and even mechanics' institutes, have originated, not with irreligious but with Christian men. Were we to mention the names of the world's great benefactors, the argument would be greatly strengthened. Let two or three, whose reputation is now known to the world, suffice. Howard, *the* philanthropist, who is said to have pursued an open but unfrequented path to immortality, followed in the steps of Jesus. Clarkson drank deep of the spirit of Christianity. Mrs. Fry lived by faith in the Son of God. Sarah Marten visited the prisoners in Yarmouth gaol for her Saviour's sake. The missionaries of the various Christian bodies who have gone forth to live, or rather to die, among the heathen, have presented themselves willing sacrifices on the altar of true Christianity. Two men once entered in perfect health the awful gates of a leper institution in South Africa. No one who passed those portals ever returned to the living, healthful world; there he remained to die, and there he was buried. They knew this, and yet deliberately entered. They were Christian

missionaries of the Moravian church, and they thus sacrificed all for the hope of leading to heaven some poor souls among the wretched inmates of that awful place. No heroism ever surpassed this; no merely human philanthropy ever transcended this; and it was the fruit of simple, but ardent piety.

This, then, is the result. True religion forms a holy enclosure within which the law of brotherly love prevails. We realize the love of God in our own salvation by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, and we long and love to diffuse its savour around. We are constrained to "arise and shine, because our light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us," Isa. lx. 1—3.

O that, for the honour of Christianity, its professors may all be found solicitously seeking the welfare of their fellow men, bodily, mental, and spiritual!

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